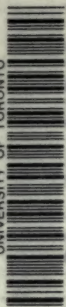


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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Times

15/12/28

ES, SATURDAY, DECEMBER

Obituary

LADY STRACHEY.

INDIAN MEMORIES.

Jane Maria Lady Strachey died at her residence in Gordon-square, W.C., yesterday, at the age of 88. She was a daughter of Sir John Peter Grant, of Rothiemurchus, and in 1859 she was married to Lieutenant-General Sir Richard Strachey, who died in 1908. Lady Strachey was the author of "Lay Texts," "Poets on Poets," "Nursery Lyrics," and edited the delightful "Memoirs of a Highland Lady." She was the mother of 13 children, of whom nine survive her. Among them are Mr. Lytton Strachey, the author of "Eminent Victorians," "Elizabeth and Essex," and other works; Lieutenant-Colonel John Strachey, Colonel Richard John Strachey, Miss J. P. Strachey, Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge; and Miss Philippa Strachey.

Lady Strachey's deep interest in the welfare of India, manifested down to old age by frequent attendances at meetings connected with that country, was based upon the strongest personal links. Her father, Sir John Peter Grant, was the second of his family to win distinction in India. He was a member of the Government of India both with Dalhousie and with Canning, and when, in the Mutiny, Mr. Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Agra Provinces, was cut off from all communication with a portion of his territory, Sir John was appointed temporary Lieutenant-Governor of the severed portion, having a seat first at Benares and then at Allahabad. He was much impressed by the ability of young Richard Strachey who accompanied him and became secretary in all departments. Strachey had married in 1864, and had lost his wife a year later. When the Mutiny was quelled and Sir John Peter Grant went to Calcutta as the second Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Strachey married his daughter on January 4, 1859. At that time Grant was sharing the unpopularity among the European population of the Viceroy, "Clemency" Canning, and it was known that his very liberal views had had a great influence in the



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MEMOIRS OF A HIGHLAND LADY



THE AUTHOR.

MEMOIRS OF A HIGHLAND LADY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ELIZABETH
GRANT OF ROTHIE MURCHUS AFTER-
WARDS MRS SMITH OF BALTIBOYS
1797-1830

EDITED BY
LADY STRACHEY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1911

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MEMOIRS OF A HIGHLAND LADY

CHAPTER I

1797-1803

I WAS born on the 7th of May 1797, of a Sunday evening, at No. 6 (north side) of Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, in my father's own lately built house, and I am the eldest of the five children he and my mother reared to maturity.

My parents had married young; my father wanted a few weeks of twenty-two and my mother a very few of twenty-one when they went together for better for worse. My poor mother!

They were married on the 2nd of August 1796, in the church of the little village of Houghton-le-Spring, in the county of Durham. I have no genealogical tree of either family at hand, so not liking to trust to memory in particulars of this nature, I must be content with stating that my father was descended not very remotely from the Chief of the Clan Grant, and that these cadets of that great house having been provided for handsomely in the way of property, and having also been generally men of abilities in their rude times, had connected themselves well in marriage, and held rather a high position among the lesser barons of their wild country.

My mother was also of ancient birth, the Ironsides having held their small estate near Houghton-le-Spring from the times of our early Norman kings, the cross

they wear for arms having been won in the holy wars; the tradition in the family indeed carried back their origin to the Saxon era to which their name belongs, and it may be so, for Saxon remains abound in that part of England.

My parents met in Glasgow in their dancing days, and there formed an attachment which lasted to the very close of their long lives through many troubles, many checks, and many changes; but they did not marry immediately, my father at the period of their first acquaintance not being exactly his own master. His childhood had been passed strangely without any fixed plan, and in various homes under widely different systems, but with the certain future of wealth and station if he lived. The beautiful plain of Rothiemurchus, with its lakes and rivers and forest and mountain glens, offered in those old days but a few cleared sunny patches fit for tillage; black cattle were its staple products; its real wealth, its timber, was unthought of, so that as its sons multiplied the laird of the period felt some difficulty in maintaining them; the result in the generation to which my grandfather, Dr William Grant, belonged, was that he with a younger brother, and a set of half-uncles much about their own age, were all shoved off about the world to scramble through it as they best could with little but their good blood to help them. The fortunes of this set of adventurers were various; some fared well, others worse, but all who survived returned to end their days where they began them, for no change of circumstances can change the heart of a Highlander; faithful to the impressions of his youth wherever he may have wandered, whatever may have befallen him, to his own hills he must return in his old age, if only to lay his bones beneath the heather; at least it was so in my grandfather's day, for he died at the Doune,¹ still but the laird's brother, surrounded by his relations. He had prospered in his struggle for independence, beginning his medical studies at Aberdeen and pur-

¹ The name of the house on the Rothiemurchus estate.

suing them through several of the continental hospitals, remaining some time at Leyden and then fixing in London, where he got into good practice; turned author so successfully that one of his works, a treatise on fever, was translated into both French and German; and then married an heiress of the name of Raper of a very respectable and highly talented family.

They were for some years—twelve, I think—childless, then came my father, and four years afterwards his only sister, my aunt Mrs Frere, at whose birth her mother died. Good Mrs Sophy Williams, my father's attendant, *bonne* or nursery governess, soon removed with both her charges to their grandfather Raper's country-house at Twyford, near Bishop's Stortford, where they remained till his death. My aunt was then adopted by other Raper relations, and my father went back to *his* father, who just at that time was retiring from his profession. In due course he accompanied the Doctor to Rothiemurchus, and on his death, which happened shortly and very suddenly, his uncle Rothie took entire charge of his heir. The summers were passed at Inverdrue,¹ the winters at Elgin, and a succession of tutors—queer men enough, by their pupil's account of them—were engaged to superintend the studies of this wilful boy and a whole host of cousins, who helped to spoil him. This plan not exactly answering, one country school after another was tried, and at last the High School of Edinburgh, where his time wore away till the period of college arrived. He was sent to Glasgow with the intention of being prepared for the bar; there he met my mother: she was on a visit to her elder sister, Mrs Leitch, a very beautiful woman, the wife of one of the principal merchants of that eminently mercantile city.

My mother's education had been a very simple matter. She had grown up healthy and happy in her own village among a crowd of brothers and sisters, and cousins amounting to a multitude, learning the mere rudiments of knowledge from the village school-

¹ A small house on the property.

mistress, catching up stray bits of better things from the lessons of her brothers, and enjoying any chance gaiety that now and then wakened up the quiet but very sociable neighbourhood. My grandfather Ironside was a clergyman, rector of an adjoining parish, curate of his own, and with his little private income might have done more for his children had he not had so many of them, and been besides a man of rather expensively hospitable habits. My aunt Leitch's marriage opened the world to the family, and my mother's engagement to my father was the first result.

As I have mentioned, the marriage was deferred a while, and before it took place both the bride's father and the bridegroom's uncle died. My grandfather Ironside had been so long helplessly paralytic, that his death was really a release from a very pitiable existence. My uncle Rothie died suddenly in the full vigour of a green old age. He was found in his study, leaning back in his chair, a corpse, with his large Bible open before him. This event altered my father's position, it enabled him to marry when he liked, and it would have released him from his legal studies had he been inclined to give them up; but besides that he thought a knowledge of law necessary to the usefulness of a country gentleman, he really liked the profession; and the French Revolution, in the startling shake it had given to the aristocracy of all Europe while it was annihilating its own, had made it a fashion for all men to provide themselves with some means of earning a future livelihood, should the torrent of democracy reach to other lands. He therefore, during the year of mourning requisite on both sides, took a lodging in Edinburgh, where he gave a succession of bachelor entertainments, got through his law trials, and then, to make sure of the fidelity of his attachment, went over to Ireland with an Irish college friend, and made a gay tour through Cork, Limerick, and Wicklow before appearing at Houghton. My mother expected him, but she had not thought herself justified in formally announcing this; she had therefore to meet some

frowns for having rejected noble and wealthy suitors, for the sake of him who was considered to have been trifling with her, and whom she must have loved for himself alone—for mind and manner only—as neither he nor she had any idea of the extent of his inheritance, and in person he was not handsome.

On their marriage my parents settled in Edinburgh, which was to be their home, and where my father had purchased one of the only three houses then finished in Charlotte Square. Here he was to pursue his profession, spending the summer vacations either on the beautiful Highland property, or in travels which were sometimes to extend to the south of England, a pretty estate in Hertfordshire having fallen to him just at this time by the death of his uncle Raper.

The house at Thorley Hall was so small as to be inconvenient, but its furniture was valuable; a fine library, some good pictures, portfolios of prints, and all sorts of philosophical instruments formed part of it, all of which were removed to the Doune. The land was worth about £1200 a year. The rents of Rothiemurchus were small, not more than £800, but the timber was beginning to be marketable; three or four thousand a year could easily have been cut out of that extensive forest for ever, and hardly have been missed. My grandfather Grant had left his son £10,000 in ready money, and my aunt Frere inherited her mother's fortune, so that life began well with these happy young people. To assist in the spending of what was then a fine income, there were numberless relations on both sides to bring gay spirits, a good deal of talent, a good deal of beauty, with healthy appetites to the hospitable board where they were so welcome. Bachelor friends, too, were not wanting, and as at that time gentlemen seldom reappeared in the drawing-room after dinner, they made, as the wine merchant thought, excellent use of their freedom from ladies' society.

My memory, however, does not go back to these scenes, it is very indistinct as to all that happened before I was four years old. I remember nothing of

Edinburgh but a certain waggon full of black sacks which represented coals, which I vainly attempted to pull or push up some steps in the garden, and which I think was taken from me for crying, so that its possession must have been very near my baby heart when the impression was so vivid. I have a dreamy recollection of beating a boy in a red jacket who was playing with me, and of shutting up another in some cupboard, while I went about with his drum which he had refused me. My victims were my regular companions, the children of the houses on each side of us; the red jacket was the present Sir George Sinclair, agricultural Sir John's eldest son, and the drum boy was poor little Johnny Redfearn, who died at five years of age, to the abiding grief of his parents; he was the last survivor of their once well-filled nursery. Beyond this, I have no remembrance of Charlotte Square, which, considering that I was but three years and a half old when we left it for ever, is not surprising.

Of the Highlands, that dear home of all our young hearts, I have more perfect glimmerings. My father and mother had spent there the summer following my birth, and I fancy the winter also, and the next summer, at the end of which, in September, my brother William was born. I had been named Elizabeth after my two grandmothers and two aunts, one of each side, Mrs Leitch and Mrs Frere. William Patrick was called after both grandfathers, and my great-uncle Rothie, whom my father had immediately succeeded. He was christened by the Presbyterian parson, and nursed by my mother, so that perhaps that nursing winter was the one they all spent at the Doune, with my two aunts, Mrs Frere and Mrs Bourne, then Lissy Grant and Mary Ironside, for company.

It was when I was weaned there had come a tall randy kind of woman from Forres, a "Meg Merrilies," to take care of me; our much-loved Betty *Glass* in those days, Betty *Campbell* afterwards when she married the grieve. She had William from his birth,



LADY GRANT WITH HER TWO CHILDREN.

and to test the strength of the young heir, she gave him, before she washed him, a spoonful of gin in Highland fashion, which medicine he survived to my great sorrow ; for spoiled as I had been, the darling of so many, I so much disliked the arrival of this brother near the throne, that I very early tried to make away with him. One day that I had been left alone in his room before his dressing time I seized his clothes, which had been all stitched together and laid upon the bed ready to put on him, and carrying the bundle to the fire tried to throw it on the flaming peats, saying with all the spite of a baby not a year and a half old, "Dere! burn! nassy sing!" which exclamation brought in an aunt, horror-struck. But all this is hearsay. Of my own impressions I have a clear recollection of some West Indian seeds, pretty, red and shiny, with black spots on them, sweet-smelling beans, and a variety of small shells, all of which were kept in a lower drawer of a japanned dressing-table in my mother's room, for the purpose, it appeared to me, of my playing with them.

I recollect also the bookcases in my father's study, a set of steps by which he used to reach the upper shelves, and up which I used to climb in terror, not of a fall, but of being set in the corner as a punishment—a fox-tail for dusting, and a dark place in the wall where the peats were kept, so that I think while my mother was taken up with her baby boy I must have been the companion of my father.

I remember building materials lying about, an old woman with a wooden leg warning me from some mischief, and a lady in a blue gown assisting me to play see-saw, she and I sitting on the ends of a plank laid across a trestle, and a clapping of hands around answering my laughter. I have also a painful remembrance of a very tearful parting from our dear Betty, who declined accompanying us when we left the Doune.

All these clearer visions of the past must relate to a summer spent in the Highlands after the birth of my sister Jane, which took place in Edinburgh in the

month of June of the year 1800. I do not imagine we ever returned to Charlotte Square afterwards.

My mother nursed Jane herself, and Betty, unassisted, took charge of us all three. Our nursery at the Doune was the room at the head of the back-stairs my mother afterwards took for her own; it had two windows looking towards Inverdrue, a fire on the hearth, two wooden cribs made by Donald Maclean, a cot cradle, a press bed for Betty into which we all of us scrambled every morning, a creepie apiece for William and me, and a low table of suitable height on which our porridge was set in the mornings. I hated mine, and Betty used to strew brown sugar over it to make it more palatable. She washed us well, dressed us after a fashion, set us to look at pictures while she tidied the room, and then set off out of doors, where she kept us all day. We were a great deal in the fields with John Campbell the grieve, and we talked to everybody we met, and Betty sang to us and told us fairy tales, and made rush crowns for us, and kept us as happy as I wish all children were. I don't feel that I remember all these details, there is just an idea of some of them fixed by after-allusions.

In the winter of 1802, after a season of all blank, I wake up in a gloomy house in London in Bury Place; there were no aunts, no Betty, a cross nurse, Mrs Day, who took us to walk somewhere where there was gravel, and nothing and nobody to play with; the few objects round us new and disagreeable. William and Jane were kept in great order by Mrs Day. William she bullied. Jane she was fond of; everybody was fond of Jane, she was always so good; me she did not like, I was so self-willed. I therefore gave her very little of my company, but spent most of my time with Mrs Lynch, my mother's maid, an Englishwoman who had been with us some time, engaged in London soon after my mother's marriage when they first visited Thorley Hall. Mrs Lynch taught me to sew, for I was always very fond of my needle and my scissors too. I shaped and cut out and stitched up my doll's clothes from

very early days. I used to read to her too, she was so good-natured! I fancy my aunts had taught me to read, though I do not remember this or *them* up to this date.

My books had gaudy paper backs, red, and green, and all manner of colours, with dashes of gold dabbled on, in size vigesimo quartos, paper coarse, printing black, and the contents enchanting; Puss in Boots, Riquet with the Tuft, Blue Beard, Cinderella, The Genii and the Fisherman; and in a plain marble cover on finer paper, full of prints, a small history of Rome, where one print so shocked me—Tullia in her car riding over the body of her father—that I never would open that classic page again.

It is here in Bury Place that the first distinct notion of the appearance of my parents presents itself; I see my father in his study at a table writing; a little sallow man without any remarkable feature, his hair all drawn back over his head, powdered and tied in a queue with a great bow of black ribbon. He has on drab-coloured stocking pantaloons and little boots up to the knee, from the two-pointed front of which dangles a tassel. The last Duke of Gloucester wore the very dittoes, stocking pantaloons and all, when we saw him in the year 1832 at Cheltenham. Strange, as this figure rises before my mental eye, it is one which always produces recollections of happiness, for my father's voice was the herald of joy to us children, he was the king of all our romping plays, had always something agreeable to say, and even when too much occupied to attend to us, would refuse our petitioning faces with a kindness and an air of truthful regret so sympathetic that he gave us nearly as much pleasure as if he could have assented. There was a charm in his manner I have never known any one of any age or station capable of resisting, and which my dear sister Mary inherited. My mother, though accounted such a handsome person, impresses my memory much less agreeably. A very small mouth, dark hair curling all over her head in a bush close to her eyes, white shapeless gowns, apparently

bundled up near the chin without any waist visible, her form extended on the sofa, a book in her hands, and a resident nervous headache which precluded her from enduring noise, is the early recollection that remains with me concerning her. She had probably been ill in Bury Place, which had contributed to make our residence there so melancholy.

The reason for our removal from Edinburgh to London was my father's having determined on giving up the Scotch for the English bar. Why, with his large fortune, and plenty to do both on his Highland and his Hertfordshire properties, he should have followed any profession but that of managing them, nobody could very well tell; but as his wish was to be a great lawyer, some of his dear friends, in whose way he stood in Edinburgh, easily persuaded him that his abilities were too superior to be frittered away in a mere provincial town, and that Westminster Hall was the only sphere for such talents—the road to St Stephen's! the fit arena for display! I have often thought my poor mother's headaches had something to do with all these mistakes of her young, much-loved husband. She had certainly, as far as I remember, very little of his company, only just during dinner, and for the little while he sat to drink his wine afterwards. William and I always came to them at that time, and when my mother went up to the drawing-room to make the tea we two went on further to bed. Though so young, we were always sent upstairs by ourselves to our nursery at the top of the house in the dark; that is, we had no candle, but a glimmering of light fell in rays on the windings of the crooked stairs from a lamp on some landing above. On the small gallery on the second floor, which we had to pass on our ascent to our attics, there stood a big hair trunk into which I had often seen Mrs Lynch dive for various necessities required in her needlework. Poor William, who was kept in the nursery by Mrs Day, and who during his periodical descents and ascents seldom looked beyond his own two little feet, which he had some difficulty in placing and pulling up and down after



SIR JOHN PETER GRANT, SEVENTH LAIRD OF ROTHERMURCHUS.

him while she was tugging him along by whichever unfortunate arm she happened to have hold of, had never noticed in the sunlight this object, which appearing large and dark in the gloomy evenings, and feeling rough to the touch, he took for a wild beast, the wolf, in fact, which had eaten Red Riding Hood. He began at first to shrink, and then to shudder, and then to stop, till soon I could not get him past the trunk at all. Our delay being noticed by Mrs Day, that enlightened person, on being informed of the cause, took upon herself to put an end to all such nonsense in a summary manner. She shook me out of the way, and well thumped poor William. The next night the terrors of the journey and his probable warm reception at the end of it so worked upon the poor child's mind that he became quite nervous long before his bedtime, and this sort of agony increased so much in the course of a day or two that my father noticed it; but as we kept our secret faithfully our misery continued a little longer, till my father, certain there was something wrong, followed us as hand and hand we very slowly withdrew. He found William stifling his sobs and trembling in every limb some steps below the fatal landing, and I, with my arm round him, kissing him and trying to encourage him to proceed. My father called for lights, and without a word of anger or mockery showed his boy the true nature of this object of dread. He was led gently to it, to look at it, feel it, sit on it, see it opened, not only then, but in the morning; and though we had still to go to bed by ourselves, the drawing-room door was henceforward left open till our little steps were heard no more.

About this time, that is, during the course of the two years which followed our arrival in London, various perceptions dawned on my young mind to which I can prefix no date, neither can I remember the order in which I learned them. My aunt Lissy became known to me. She had lived generally with my father since his marriage; it was her home; but though she was the lady in the blue gown, I have no distinct idea of her

before this, when she returned from some visit she had been paying and brought to Jane and me a pretty basket each. Mine went to bed with me, was settled at my feet that I might see it the first thing in the morning. I see it now, as plainly as then, an oval open basket of fine straw, not by any means small, and with a handle apparently tied on by two knots of blue ribbon.

In the summer of this year we must have gone to Tunbridge Wells, for I remember perfectly a house near the common there where we were allowed to run about all day, and where to our delight we found some heather which we greeted as an old friend. I recollect too a green paper on the walls of the room in which I slept covered all over with sprigs in a regular pattern, that it amused me extremely to wake up in the morning and fall a-counting. In the autumn we must have gone to Eastbourne, for I remember the seashore, splashing my feet into the cool green water in the little pools between the rocks, picking up seaweed, star-fish, and jelly blobs, and filling my dear basket with quantities of shells. At some inn on our way to or from one of these places, while we little people were at our bread-and-milk supper at one table, and the elders at their dinner at another, we were all startled by the sounds of a beautiful voice outside, clear and sweet and tuneful, singing "Over the mountains and over the moors, Hungry and barefoot I wander forlorn." It was one of the fashionable ballads of the day out of a favourite farce—"No song no supper," I think, and not inappropriate to the condition of the poor creature who was wandering about singing it. My father opened the window and threw out "some charity," when the "kind gentlefolks" were rewarded by another verse which enabled me to pick up the air, and it became my favourite for many a month to come, piped in a childish treble very unlike the silvery tones I had learned it from.

William and I were taken to see a ruin near Eastbourne, and what was called the field of Battle Abbey, and my mother, in that sack of a white gown with a little hat stuck round with bows of ribbon on one

side of her head, showed us the spot where brave King Harold fell, for she was a Saxon in name and feeling, and in her historical lessons she never omitted the scanty praise she could now and then bestow faithfully on the race she gloried in descending from. It is curious that I have no recollection of learning anything from anybody except this, by chance as it were, though I have understood I was a little wonder, my aunts having amused themselves in making a sort of show of me. I read well at three years old, had long ballads off by heart, counted miraculously, danced heel and toe, the Highland fling, and Highland shuffle, and sang, perched upon the table, ever so many Scotch songs, "Toming soo ze eye" and such like, to the amusement of the partial assembly. I fancy I was indebted to aunt Mary for these higher accomplishments; counting I know my aunt Lissy taught me, with a general notion of the four first rules of arithmetic by the help of little bags of beans, which were kept in one of the compartments of an immense box full of all sorts of *tangible* helps to knowledge. My further progress might have been checked had my father and mother been so unwise as to carry out an intention they frequently reverted to: that of going over from Eastbourne to France. The short peace with France had been signed early in the year. I can remember the illuminations in London on account of it. On a clear day the French coast was distinctly visible through a telescope from Eastbourne, and so many fishing-boats came over with cheap poultry, eggs, and other market wares that people were quite bit with a wish to make so short a voyage. Some that did never returned, war having been declared again, and Buonaparte retaining all travellers unlucky enough to have trusted themselves to his ill-temper.

Before Christmas we were established in the tall house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which continued for ten years to be the principal home of the family. 1803 therefore saw us settled in this new abode, where our fine, airy nurseries, though reached at the expense of a weary climb, were a delightful change from the gloom

of Bury Place. We had the Square to play in, were allowed to run about there without a maid, and soon made acquaintance with plenty of children as well pleased with new companions as ourselves. From this time our town life was never an unhappy one. In the winter my aunt Mary, who had been away, returned with aunt Fanny, my mother's only other unmarried sister. They remained some months, which we children liked. Aunt Mary was dearly loved by us all; she knew how to manage us, could amuse without letting us plague her—an art poor aunt Fanny did not understand so well. My mother's youngest brother, my uncle Edward, who was pursuing his studies at Woolwich with the intention of proceeding to India, spent his vacations frequently with us. Besides these there were Highland cousins innumerable, who, on their periodical flights from the wild hills where they could find nothing, to the broad world where they never failed to gather plenty if they lived, were sure of a resting-place with my father on their passage. It was a strange household for London, this hotel for all relations. We were playthings for every one, and perhaps a little more made of than was good for all of us.

Amongst other indulgences this spring I was taken twice to the play, and once to Sadler's Wells with William. The first play was "The Caravan." John Kemble acted in it; the lover, and a very lugubrious one he seemed to be. The actor that delighted me was a dog, a real Newfoundland trained to leap into a cataract and bring dripping out of the water, *real* water, a doll representing a child which had spoken in the scene a few minutes before, and had then appeared to be dropped by a lady in distress while flying across a plank up at the top of the stage, the only bridge across the torrent. They could not persuade me the doll was not the real child: I thought it dead, drowned, and cried and sobbed so violently I was hardly to be pacified,—not till all the audience had been attracted by the noise. The other play was "The Busy Body." Bannister in all sorts of scrapes, doing mischief

continually from over-officiousness, hid in a chimney, discovered when least welcome, etc., a collection of *contretemps* that fidgeted and annoyed much more than they amused me. The horsemanship with the tumblers, rope dancers, etc., frightened me. William, little as he was, was in ecstasies.

In the month of May of this year, 1803, on the 21st, in the evening, my sister Mary was born. From this point I date all my perfect recollections; all that happened stands clearly before me now at the end of a long life as if that one event had wakened up a sleeping intellect. It was indeed a matter of moment to me, for in some way the new baby and I were thrown upon each other from her birth. Jane was so engrossingly the pet of my mother and the companion of my brother, that she was less my associate than the mere difference in our ages warranted. My father was always busy, my mother generally ill, William, the heir, was the child of consequence to all the family connections, more noticed, of course, by them than either of us his sisters. I was not romp enough for him, so that he did not seek me unless Jane was out of the way; therefore when my aunts were away I was often lonely. The baby just suited me for a playmate, to watch her, amuse her, help to attend upon her, and by and by to work for her and teach her, were my delight, and as I was six years old when she was born, I was quite a little mother to her, preferring her infinitely to the dolls which had hitherto chiefly occupied me.

My mother had been alarmingly ill after the birth of this her finest child. She had lost the use of her limbs, and was carried up and down stairs, and to and from the carriage, when she took her airings. As my father found it necessary to go to the Highlands in the summer, and had to attend circuit somewhere in the north of England, it was resolved that she and we should have a few weeks of sea-bathing at Scarborough on our way; a sort of couch was contrived for her, on which she lay comfortably in the large *berline* we had hitherto used, and which the four horses must have found heavy

enough when weighted with all its imperials, hat boxes, and the great hair trunk that had been poor William's terror. Mrs Lynch and Mackenzie, who had been my father's valet before he married, were on the outside; my father, Jane, and I within with my mother, and we travelled with our own horses ridden by two postillions in green jackets and jockey caps, leaving London, I think, in July. In the heavy post-chariot behind were the two nurses, the baby in a swinging cot, William, who was too riotous to be near my mother, and a footman in charge of them. What it must have cost to have carried such a party from London to the Highlands! and how often we travelled that north road! Every good inn became a sort of home, every obliging landlord or landlady an old friend. We had cakes here, a garden with a summer-house there, a parrot farther on, all to look forward to on every migration, along with the pleasant flatteries on our growth and our looks of health; as if such a train would not have been greeted joyously by every publican! We travelled slowly, thirty miles a day on an average, starting late and stopping early, with a bait soon after noon, when we children dined. I forget when we reached Scarborough, nor can I recollect any particular impression made by the town itself or the country around, but I do remember feeling astonishment at the sight of the sea, and also surprise and *annoyance*—who would have believed this in such a child?—at our not having a whole house to ourselves, but lodging in the lower and very upper part of a house, the rest of which was occupied by the family of Sir Thomas Liddell. Another merry set of children to play with might have reconciled me to the humiliation of sharing our temporary abode with our neighbour, had we been able to secure such companions as the first few days promised. Overtures on both parts were answered on both parts, and Lady Williamson, Lady Normanby, Lady Barrington, and two little white-faced brothers had arrived at blowing soap-bubbles most merrily with William and me. When laughing too loud one

unfortunate morning, our respective attendants were attracted by the uproar and flew to separate us. They shook us well, Grants and Liddells, scolded us well, and soon divided us, wondering what our mammas would say at our offering to make strange acquaintance, when we knew we were forbidden to speak to any one they did not know; so we Grants used to listen to the Liddells, who monopolised the garden, and to their mother who played delightfully on the harp, and amuse ourselves as we best could, alone.

A company of strolling-players happening to arrive in the town, William and I were taken to see them; the state of their playhouse astonished us not a little. The small dirty house, though wretchedly lighted, brought the audience and the stage so close together that the streaks of paint on the actors' faces were plainly visible, also the gauze coverings on the necks and arms of the actresses; then the bungling machinery, the prompter's voice, the few scenes and the shabby scene-shifters, all so revealed the business that illusion there was none, and we who at Drury Lane and Astley's and Covent Garden had felt ourselves transported to fairyland, were quite pained by the preparations for deception which the poor strollers so clumsily betrayed to us. The play was *Rosina*, an opera, and the *prima donna* so old, so wrinkled, so rouged, that had she warbled like my own Janey she would have been ill-selected as the heroine; but she sang vilely, screamed, and I must have thought so, for I learned none of her songs, and I generally picked up every air I heard.

Soon after the play I was laid up with scarlet fever, which I notice as I had it twice afterwards, and have had returns of the scarlatina throat all my life.

Upon leaving Scarborough we proceeded to Houghton, where I must have been before, as many changes in the place struck me. I have no recollection, however, of a former visit; as I remember it from this one, the village consisted of one long, wide, straggling, winding street, containing every variety of house, from the hall standing far back beyond the large courtyard,

and the low, square, substantial mansion even with the road, to the cottage of every size. A few shops here and there offered a meagre supply of indifferent wares. About the middle of the village was the church half concealed by a grove of fine old trees, the Rectory, and the then celebrated boys' school near it. The finest-looking of the court-dignified halls belonged to the Nesham family, from amongst whom my grandfather Ironside had chosen his wife. She had had but to move across the little street to the most ancient-looking of the low substantial houses which offered a long double row of windows and a wide doorway to the dusty path, protected only by posts and chains from the close approach of passengers. A kitchen wing had been added on one side; behind this were piled the roofs of the offices. A clump of old trees sheltered the east end. A large well-filled garden at the back stretched down a long slope to a small brook that drained the neighbouring banks, and all around lay the fields that had descended from father to son, they said, for *at least* 700 years. In this quiet abode my grandmother Ironside had passed her life of trials. Children came fast and noisy, funds were small, and my grandfather, a hospitable, careless man, left his farm to his man Jacky Bee, his tithes to his clerk, Cuddy Kitson, his children to the pure air of his fields, and his wife to herself and her cares as soon as he found it pleasanter to be elsewhere; he was rather an increase than a help to her difficulties, and for ten years the poor man was bedrid, paying assistants to do his duty, thus further diminishing the little my grandmother could reckon on for the support of their numerous offspring. Only nine of her fifteen children grew up to be provided for; my mother and three sisters, the eldest of whom was married when very young to Mr Leitch; the eldest son, my uncle William, went early into the army; uncle Ralph was in the law, my uncles John and Edmund were taken into Mr Leitch's counting-house; uncle Edward was a boy at school when my grandfather died. His wife did not long survive him, she lived but to



THE PARENTS OF LADY GRANT.

bless me ; and in the old family house at Houghton she had been succeeded by a pretty young woman of most engaging manners but small fortune, who had persuaded my uncle William to give up his profession for her sake, and in the full vigour of his manhood to settle down on the few acres he had not the skill to make productive, and which in a less luxurious age had been found insufficient for the wants of a family.

My mother always went to Houghton well provided with trifling presents for her numerous connections there. There had never been any lack of daughters in the house of the reigning Ironside, and they formed quite a Saxon colony by their marriages. We had a great-aunt Blackburn, Horseman, Potter, Goodchild, with cousins to match, all the degradations in name possible bestowed on the serf Saxon by his conquering Norman lord—with one redeeming great-aunt *Griffith*, who, however, had never recovered caste among her relations for her misalliance with, I believe, a school-master, though had they followed my clever Welsh great-uncle to his mountains his maligners might have heard of a princely ancestry.

Two maiden sisters of this generation, my great-aunts Peggy and Elsie, lived in the village in a square low house very near to, and very like my uncle's, but it stood back from the road, and was kept delightfully dark by some large elm trees which grew in front in a courtyard. This retreat was apparently sacred to the ancient virgins of the family, for *their* aunts Patience and Prudence had been established there before them. I hardly remember these old ladies, aunt Elsie not at all, though it was in their house that Jane and I were domiciled. Aunt Peggy made more impression, she was fat, rosy, merry, idle, told funny stories, made faces, and winked her eyes at good jokes when sometimes her laughing listeners rather blushed for her. My mother was much more attached to her aunt Nesham, the only and the maiden sister of her mother ; her house was just opposite to my uncle's, and it was the home of my two unmarried Ironside aunts, Mary and

Fanny. Aunt Jane Nesham was a charming little old lady with powdered hair turned over a cushion, and a little white muslin turban stuck up on the top of it. She wore tight-fitting cross-folded gowns with full skirts, the whitest and the clearest of muslin kerchiefs puffed over her neck, a row of pearls round her throat, and high-heeled shoes. Her house was order itself, her voice gentle and her smile the sweetest. She had been in the Highlands with my father and mother before my recollection. The cousins Nesham lived in the village, at least the then head of the family with one or two of his unmarried sisters and a young wife. Mrs Griffith and a disagreeable daughter had a small house there, and the clergyman, the schoolmaster, the doctor and Squire Hutton, and there was a populous neighbourhood. Such was Houghton as I first remember it. How different from what it is now! There are no gentry, the few neat rows of pitmen's houses have grown into streets belonging to a town. It is all dirt and bustle and huge machinery and tramways, one of which cuts through the fields of the Ironside inheritance. These frightful tramways were our childish delight; such a string of waggons running along without horses reminded us of our fairy tales, and the splendid fires blazing on all sides enchanted us, after the economical management of scanty fuel we had been accustomed to in London. We liked our young cousins too, three or four of whom were old enough to play with us.

The next stoppage on our northern journey was at Edinburgh, where we remained long enough for an abiding impression of that beautiful city to be made on a young mind. The width of the streets, the size of the houses, the brightness and the cleanliness, with the quantity of gooseberries to be bought for a penny, impressed me before I was capable of appreciating the grandeur of its position. It was then very far from being what it became a few years later, how very very far from what we see it now! The New Town was but in progress, the untidy appendages of building encumbered the half-finished streets, and where after-

wards the innumerable gardens spread in every quarter to embellish the city of palaces, there were then only unsightly greens abandoned to the washerwomen. My father had always business to detain him here. We put up at Blackwood's Hotel, at the corner of the North Bridge in Princes Street.

The Queen's Ferry was the next *landmark*, to speak in Irish fashion; no steamer in those days, no frame to run the carriage on from quay to deck. Ugly, dirty, miserable sailing vessels, an hour at the quickest crossing, sometimes two or three, it was the great drawback to the journey. The landing at Inverkeithing was as disagreeable as the embarking, as tedious too; we seldom got beyond Kinross that night, where Queen Mary, the Castle, the lake, red trout, and a splendid parrot all combined to make it one of our favourite resting-places. At Perth we were always met by my father's only surviving uncle, Sandy, the parson, his mother the Lady Jean's favourite son, and her youngest. He was of the Episcopalian Church, and had at this time the care of a chapel at Dundee. He was a popular preacher, had published very fair sermons, was an accomplished person for his times, gentlemanly in manner, taller than the "little Grants," more of a Gordon, in fact, in appearance. He had had a good deal to do with my father's education, and his own five ill-brought-up sons had been my father's principal companions towards his college days. My mother never thought kindly of this uncle, to whom my father was much attached. She judged him perhaps harshly, an easiness of temper may have been fully as much the cause of the loose discipline he maintained as want of principle, to which she ascribed his errors.

It took us three days to reach home from Perth, Blackbird, Smiler, and their pairs (whose names I have not remembered) who met us there, not being in as great a hurry to return to the Doune as we were. There was no good ford near the house in those days, the shifting river not having revealed the rather deep one near the offices that we used so constantly after-

wards; besides, there was then no road from the bridge of Alvie down the heathery bank to the boyack and so round its shallow waters to the river-side. We had to drive on, after a good peep of our dear home, two or three miles past the burn at Lynwilg, towards Aviemore, and then turn off down a seldom-travelled road through the birch woods—I smell them now—to the ford at Inverdrue, where there was a carriage-boat at the ferry a little higher up the stream, so that travellers could cross in all states of the river.

Once over the water we were at home in Rothiemurchus, our beloved Duchus,¹ which, through all the changes of our lives, has remained the spot on earth dearest to every one of us. We have been scattered far and wide, separated, never now *all* to meet again; we have grown up and married and have had new interests engrafted on our old feelings, and have changed our homes and changed all our surroundings, and most of us have lived long, busy years far away from the Highlands, yet have we never any one of us ceased to feel that *there* was the magnet to which all our purest, warmest, earliest, and latest affections were steadily drawn. No other spot ever replaced it, no other scenery ever surpassed it, no other young happiness ever seemed to approach within a comprehensible distance of our childhood at Rothiemurchus.

¹ A Gaelic word having much the same signification as *domain*. The crest of the family is an armed hand holding a broadsword, with the motto "For my Duchus."

CHAPTER II

1803-1804

IT was in July or August then in 1803 we crossed the Spey in the big boat at Inverdrue in a perfect fever of happiness. Every mountain, every hill, every bank, fence, path, tree, cottage was known to me, every face we met revealed a friend, and our acquaintance was by no means limited, for the "wide plain of the fir trees," which lies in the bosom of the Grampians, cut off by the rapid Spey from every neighbour, has its beautiful variety of mountain scenery, its heights, its dells, and glens, its lakes and plains and haughs, and it had then its miles and miles of dark pine forest through which were little clearings by the side of rapid burnies, and here and there a sawmill. We were expected, so from the boathouse to the Doune it was one long gathering, all our people flocking to meet us and to shout the "welcome home"; the only time that I remember so great an assemblage to meet us on our arrival, the custom becoming obsolete, warm and hearty as it was. William and I knew every one, remembered everything. Our dear Betty waited for us at the house anxiously; she had married the grieve, John Campbell, and was now a great lady in her high cap and shawl, and she had a baby to show us, a little daughter, the only child she ever had, called after me, to whom I was bringing a real silver coral with more than the usual complement of bells. Betty had been left in charge of the house, and beautifully clean she delivered it. We thought the floors so white, the polish so bright, the beds so snowy,

all so light, so airy, our nursery so enchanting with its row of little plain deal stools—*creepies*—and our own dear low table, round which we could ourselves place them. We were certainly easily pleased with anything Highland, for a less luxurious abode than the charmingly situated Doune at that date could hardly have been the residence of a lady and gentleman.

It took its name from a long low hill in the form of a boat with its keel upwards, at the end of which it had been rather ill-advisedly built, and which had been fortified in the ruder days when the dwelling of our ancestors had been upon the top of it. I never saw the vestige of a ruin there, but the moat is perfect, and two or three steep terraces along the side. When improving times permitted our ancestors to descend from their Doune, a formal Scotch house was built at the foot of it, with a wide door in the centre, over which were emblazoned the arms in a shield, and as many narrow windows were stuck in rows over the wall as were required to light the rooms within. A kitchen built of black turf was patched on to one end; it had an open chimney and bare rafters overhead. A green duck-pond and such offices as were at the period necessary were popped down anywhere in front and all round, wherever and whenever they were wanted. There were a barn, a smithy, and a carpenter's shop and poultry-houses, all in full view from the principal rooms, as was the duck-pond. A perfect network of sluggish streams, backwater from the Spey, crept round a little knot of wooded islands close at hand, and a garden lay at the foot of the hill. My uncle Rothie had not latterly lived here; he had married a very delicate woman, a daughter of Mr Grant of Elchies, commonly known as a Lord of Session by his legal title of Lord Elchies. She had persuaded him that the situation of this old family mansion was unhealthy, which, considering all the wood and water on this side of the Spey, and the swamp of the boyack on the other, was probably a correct opinion. He had therefore built at Inverdrue, to please her, a modern mansion very like a crab with four extended

claws, for there was a dumpy centre to live in, with four low wings, one at each corner, for offices; and this was set down on a bare heath, with a small walled garden behind and a pump standing all alone a little way off in front. Here with them my father had spent his boyhood, always, however, preferring the Doune, which had been, when deserted, let to various half-uncles and second cousins, retired half-pay captains and lieutenants, who all, after their wandering youth, returned to farm out their old age in the Highlands. A few years before his death my grandfather, the Doctor, had taken possession of it, and anticipating a much longer tenure, undertook many improvements. To the end of the old house opposite the black kitchen he stuck an outrigger of an overwhelming size, containing a cellar to which the descent was by stone steps outside, a large dining-room on the ground-floor, and a couple of good bedrooms above reached by a turning-stair; as an additional object from the windows he erected a high stable, where as long as it stood my brother William spent his leisure, and he increased the old garden, laid it out anew, and stocked it from Hertfordshire. The entrance to this paradise of our childhood was by a white gate between two cherry trees—such cherry trees—large white heart, still standing there to prove my taste, and by no means dwarfish, even beside the fine row of lime trees that extended on either side. The old house had a few low rooms on the ground-floor with many dark closets; the principal apartment was on the first floor, and reached by a wide and easy stair; the family bedroom was on the one hand, a large hall on the other for the reception of guests, and the state bedroom through it. Up in the attics, beneath the steep grey roof, were little rooms again. This was the Highland home to which my mother had been brought a bride.

I imagine that the furniture had been very much suited to the style of the house; there was some plate, some fine old china and glass, and a few valuables of little use but as curiosities. The state bed and bedroom

were curtained with rich green silk damask heavily fringed, and the japanned toilet-table—in which was my drawer of shells—with a mirror to match, and numberless boxes, trays, and baskets of japanned ware belonged to this chamber; the other rooms were, I fancy, rather bare. There was, however, never any lack of living furniture. My mother found established there my great-uncle Sandy with his English wife, her sister, and all their carpet work, two of the five sons, an old Donald—a faithful servant of my grandfather's, who had been pensioned for his merits—an old Christy, who had gone from Strathspey to wait on my father and my aunt Lissy, and their *bonne* good Mrs Sophy Williams. She had her pension and her attic, and so had Mr Dallas, one of the line of tutors, when he chose to come to it. Then there were college friends, bachelor cousins, and it was the fashion of the country for any of the nearer neighbours, when they came in their full dress to pay their occasional morning visits, to expect to be pressed to remain the day, often the night, as the distances are considerable in that thinly-peopled district. My father and mother never wanted for company, and the house was as full of servants as an Indian or an Irish one, strange, ignorant creatures, running about in each other's way, wondering at the fine English maids who could make so little of them. Amongst the rest was a piper, who, for fear of spoiling the delicacy of the touch of his fingers, declined any work unconnected with whisky, which with plenty of oat-bread and cheese was given to all-comers all day long.

Most of the farms were occupied by relations, Colonel William Grant was at the Croft, Captain Lewis at Inverdrue. These were my father's great-uncles. Lieutenant Cameron, a cousin, came to Kinapol from Kinrara as soon as a former tenant left it. Up in Badenoch and down in Strathspey there were endless humble connections most attentive in observing the visiting customs of the country. Relations at a greater distance were not wanting,—Cummings in Morayshire,

Mackenzies in Ross-shire, Grants in Urquhart, etc. Of great neighbours there were few. Highland properties are so extensive that there can be neither walks nor rides in general to the homes of equals. Each proprietor holds, or held, perhaps I should say, his own little court in his own domains. When he paid a brother laird a visit it was in a stately manner befitting the rareness of the event, and the number of miles he had to travel. Our great house then was Castle Grant, the residence of our Chief. It was about twenty miles off down Speyside. My father and mother were much there when they first married, my aunts Mary and Lissy delighting in the gaiety of a scene so new to them. Generally about fifty people sat down to dinner there in the great hall in the shooting season, of all ranks. There was not exactly a "below the salt" division so marked at the table, but the company at the lower end was of a very different description from those at the top, and treated accordingly with whisky punch instead of wine. Neither was there a distinct "yellow drawing-room" party, though a large portion of the guests seldom obtruded themselves on the more refined section of the company unless on a dancing evening, when all again united in the cleared hall. Sir James Grant was hospitable in the feudal style; his house was open to all; to each and all he bade a hearty welcome, and he was glad to see his table filled, and scrupulous to pay fit attention to every individual present; but in spite of much cordiality of manner it was all somewhat in the *king* style, the Chief condescending to the Clan, above the best of whom he considered himself extremely. It was a rough royalty too, plenty, but rude plenty, a footman in the gorgeous green and scarlet livery behind every chair, but they were mere gillies, lads quite untutored, sons of small tenants brought in for the occasion, the autumn gathering, and fitted into the suit that they best filled. Lady Grant was quiet and ladylike, Miss Grant a favourite, the rest of the family of less account. This was my mother's account to me years afterwards, when all connection

between us and the head of our house had unhappily ceased.

A permanent member of our family at this time I must not forget, for I bore her great affection. She was indeed very kind to us, and very careful of us the few years she remained in the household. She was a natural daughter of my grandfather's, born long after his wife's death, and had been brought up by his sister the Lady Logie. When this great-aunt of mine died, "Miss Jenny" removed as matter of course to the family asylum, as I may call my father's house. She was entrusted with the store-room keys, and was employed as a general superintendent of the family business till she married, which event, luckily for her, poor thing, was not very long delayed. A Forres beau, a Mr Arthur Cooper, learned in the law, became her husband, and so relieved my mother of one of her burdens. It was indeed a strange mixture of ranks and positions and interests, of which my mother was the head. I do not imagine that it was always harmony among them. My parents were both too young, too inexperienced, to be very patient with such a heterogeneous assemblage. It might do very well in the bright summer weather when an out-door life in the pure air occupied all the day and produced a glow of spirits for all the night, but there were wintry weeks in this gay sphere of theirs, clouds and storms and chills, when annoyances gloomed into grievances, and worry brought on ill-humour. In those days, unluckily, education had not extended to the temper. My mother's family cares were principally confined to such as she could reach with her needle, in the use of which she was very dexterous. As for the rest, after the dinner was ordered and the windows opened, matters were left very much to the direction of the chances.

My father was a much more active person, very despotic when called on to decide, yet much beloved. An eye everywhere, nursery, kitchen, farm, garden, tenantry, but not a steady eye, no prevention in it,

fitful glances seeing sometimes too much, and very summary in the punishment of detected offences. He was occupied principally at this time with his mason and carpenter, as he was making great changes in and about the Doune. These changes, indeed, employed him most of his life, for he so frequently altered in the present year what had been executed the year before, that neither he nor his allies, Donald Maclean and the Colleys, were ever out of work. The changes effected up to this period, the autumn of 1803, when we reached our beloved Highland home from Scarborough and Houghton, were of some importance. My grandfather's outrigger had been heightened and lengthened, and carried back beyond the old house, the windows in it had all been changed and enlarged, and ornamented with cut granite; in fact, a handsome modern wing appeared in place of an ill-contrived ugly appendage. It was intended at no very distant time to have matched it with another, and to have connected the two by a handsome portico, all in front of the old house, which would have been entirely concealed, and being single, was to have had all its windows turned to the back, looking on a neat square of offices, some of which were now in progress. My grandfather's new dining-room was thus made into a pleasant drawing-room, his turning-stair was replaced by an easier one in a hall which divided the drawing-room from a new dining-room, and in which was the door of entrance to this modern part of the house. Above were the spare bedrooms and dressing-rooms, and over them two large attics, barrack-rooms, one for the maids, the other for visiting maidens, young ladies who in this primitive age were quite in the habit of being thus huddled up in company. In the old part of the house my father's study, the ancient reception hall, had been cut short by a window to give him a dressing-room, and the black kitchen outside had vanished, much to the satisfaction of my mother and Mrs Lynch, who declared no decent dinner could by possibility be cooked in it. It was indeed a rude apology for a set of kitchen offices. A

mouse one day fell into the soup from the rafters, a sample of a hundred such accidents.

To make room for the new range of servants' rooms, part of the end of the hill had to be cut away, spoiling entirely the boat shape of our Doune. The soil thus removed was thrown into the nearest channel of the backwater, it being my father's intention to fill these up by degrees; an improvement to which William and I were decidedly opposed, for on the broom island, the largest of the group amidst this maze of waters, our very merriest hours were spent. A couple of wide, well-worn planks formed the bridge by which we crossed to our Elysian field; two large alder trees grew close to the opposite end of this charming bridge, making the shallow water underneath look as dark and dangerous as "Annan Water" did to Annie's lover; an additional delight to us. Between the two large alders hung in gipsy fashion the large cauldron used for the washing; a rude open shed, just sufficient to protect the officiating damsels from the weather; tubs, cogues, lippies, a watering-pot and a beetle—a bit of wood, bottle-shaped, with which the clothes were thumped, Indian and French fashion—lay all about among the yellow broom under the alders and hazels on this happy island, the scene of as much mirth and as much fun as ever lightened heavy labour, for be it remembered the high stable was in very close neighbourhood! William and I were never-failing parts of the merry group, for our time was pretty much at our own disposal, Jane joining us only occasionally. We two elder ones were of an age to say our lessons every day to my mother, and we always faithfully learned our twelve words—that is, I did—out of a red-marble-covered book filled with columns of words in large, black print; but my mother was not often able to hear us; sometimes she was ill, and sometimes she was busy, and sometimes she was from home, and sometimes she had company at home, and our lessons had oftentimes to be got pretty perfect before we were called upon to say them. But we had plenty of story books to read on rainy days,



THE DOUNE.

and we had pleasure in reading to ourselves, for even Jane at three years old could read her "Cobwebs to catch Flies." I was fond, too, of dressing my doll by the side of Mrs Lynch, and of learning to write from Mackenzie. On fine days we were always out, either by ourselves or with a son of the old gardener, George Ross, to attend us. There was also a Highland nursery maid and Mrs Acres, the baby's nurse, superintending. Amongst them they did not take very good care of us, for William was found one sunny morning very near the Spey, sailing away in a washing-tub, paddling along the backwater with a crooked stick in his hand for an oar, and his pocket-handkerchief knotted on to another he had stuck between his knees for a flag. A summer-set into the rapid river, had he reached it, would have made an end of him, but for my voice of rapturous delight from the bank where I stood clapping my hands at his progress, which directed some one to our doings, and thus saved the young laird from his perilous situation.

So passed our summer days; we grew strong and healthy, and we were very happy, revelling among the blackberries on the Doune till we were *tattooed*, frocks and all, like American Indians; in the garden, stung into objects by the mosquitoes in the fruit bushes; in our dear broom island, or farther off sometimes in the forest, gathering cranberries and lying half asleep upon the fragrant heather, listening to tales of the fairy guardians of all the beautiful scenery around us. I was a tall, pale, slight, fair child to look at, but I seldom ailed anything. William, fat and rosy and sturdy, was the picture of a robust boy. Jane was the beauty, small and well formed, with a healthy colour and her Ironside eyes. She was the flower of the little flock, for Mary was a mere large, white baby, very inanimate, nor anyway engaging to any one but my mother, who always made the youngest her favourite.

In winter we returned to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and then began our sorrows. Two short walks in the Square every day, sauntering behind a new nurse, Mrs

Millar, who had come to wean the baby; an illness of my mother's, whose room being just beneath our nursery, prevented all the noisy plays we loved; and next, a governess, a young timid girl, a Miss Gardiner, quite new to her business, who was always in a fright lest neither we nor herself were doing right, and whom we soon tyrannised over properly; for my father and mother and my aunts went to Bath to meet Mr and Mrs Leitch, and we were left with this poor Miss Gardiner, who from the beginning had always lived up in the schoolroom with us, and never entered the drawing-room unless invited. How well I remember the morning after her arrival. She had charge of William, Jane, and me. We were all brought in by Mrs Millar and seated together upon a low sofa without a back which had been made for us. Our schoolroom was the large front nursery, curtained anew and carpeted. There were besides the sofa, four chairs, two tables, one in the middle of the room, one against the wall; a high fender, of course, two hanging bookcases, six framed maps, one on Mercator's projection, which we never could understand; a crib in which William slept—I slept in my mother's dressing-room, Jane in the nursery—and between the two windows a large office desk, opening on each side, with two high stools belonging to it. To increase the enjoyment of this prospect, into my hands was put the large edition of Lindley Murray's grammar, William was presented with "Geography by a Lady for the use of her own Children," not one word of which he was capable of reading, and Jane—who had fine easy times of it in our eyes, though I question whether at three years of age she thought so—had a spelling-book given to her. Such was the commencement to us of the year 1804. We were soon as thoroughly miserable as from this method of instruction our anxious parents could expect. The lessons were hard enough and numerous enough, considering the mere infants who had to learn them, but for my part, though I would rather not have had them, they were very little in my way, although the

notes of the whole music gamut were included, with the names of all the keys and the various times, etc., all at a blow, as it were. It was never any trouble to me to have to get whole pages off by rote; I was not asked to take the further trouble of thinking about them. No explanations were either asked or given, so that the brain was by no means over-excited, and the writing and cyphering and pianoforte lesson which followed the drier studies of the morning pleased me exceedingly. Hook's easy lessons were soon heard in great style, played by ear after the first painful reading, without any one but the performer being the wiser. But what we wanted was our fun, flying from crib to crib on awakening in the morning, dancing in our night-clothes, all about the room, making horses of the overturned chairs, and acting plays dressed up in old trumpery. We had only sedate amusements now. How delighted I was to escape sometimes to my aunts, from one of whom, aunt Mary, I heard stories, now real, now fabulous, always containing some moral, however, which I had wit enough to apply silently, as occasion offered. By my aunt Lissy I was diverted and instructed through the contents of the big box full of every sort of object likely to interest a child.

Poor Miss Gardiner! She was neither reasoning nor reasonable, too young for her situation, without sufficient mind, or heart, or experience for it, a mere school-girl, which at that time meant a zero; her system of restraint became intolerable, when from the absence of the heads of the family we had no relief from it. Still a certain awe of a person placed in authority over us had prevented our annoying her otherwise than by our petulance, till one day that she desired us to remain very quiet while she wrote a letter, rather a serious business with her; it was to my mother to give an account of our health and behaviour. She took a small packet of very small pens from a box near her, and a sheet of very shiny paper, and after some moments of reflection she began. I observed her accurately. "What do you call those pretty little pens?" said I.

"Crow quills, my dear," said she, for she was very kind in her manner to us. "William," said I in a low aside, "I don't think we need mind her any more, nor learn any more lessons, for she can't really teach us. She is a fool, *I* shan't mind her any more." "Very well," said William, "nor I, nor I shan't learn my lessons." He never yet had learned one, for a more thorough dunce in his childish days than this very clever brother of mine never performed the part of booby in a village school, but it was very disagreeable to him to have to try to sit quiet behind a book for half an hour two or three times a day, poor child! He was but five years old, and he was of course satisfied with any suggestion that would release him.

Some weeks before, my mother had received a note in my father's absence, which appeared greatly to irritate her. The contents I did not know, but on my father's return she imparted them to him with some lively comments to the disparagement of the writer. "I always knew she was a fool," cried she, for she spoke strongly when excited; "but I did not expect such an extreme proof of her folly." "My dear," said my father, in his quietest and calmest manner, "what did you expect from a woman who writes on satin paper with a crow quill!" In my corner with my doll and pictures I saw and heard a great deal that passed. Miss Gardiner fell her proud height on the day she wrote her letter, and she never regained a shadow of authority over us, for I led all, even good little Jane. Like Sir Robert Peel, Louis XIV., and other dictators, *je fus l'état moi*, and respect for our poor governess had vanished. The next time the crow quills and satin paper occupied her, William and I, provided with the necessary strings got ready beforehand, tied her by her dress and her feet to the legs of the chair and table, so that as she rose from her engrossing composition the crash that ensued was astounding, the fright and even pain not small. She was extremely agitated, almost angry, but so gentle in her expostulations that, like Irish servants, we were encouraged to continue a system

of annoyance that must have made her very uncomfortable. We behaved very ill, there is no doubt of it, and she had not any way of putting a stop to our impertinence. When Mrs Millar found out these proceedings and remonstrated, I told her it was of little consequence how we acted, as I knew my papa would send her away when he came home; which he did. She was not supposed to be equal to the situation, and her father came to take her home. The state of anarchy the schoolroom exhibited was perhaps as much against her as the finely penned account of it, but I have since thought that her beauty and my uncle Edward's undisguised admiration of it had as much to do with her departure as the crow quills. We heard a few years afterwards that she had married happily, and had a fine set of children of her own who would be all the better managed for the apprenticeship she had served with us.

Uncle Edward was now studying at Woolwich, expecting to proceed to India as a cadet. Fortunately old Charles Grant was able to change his appointment and give him a writership, so he came to us to prepare his equipment. Being quite a boy, full of spirits and not the least studious, he romped with his little nephew and nieces to our hearts' content, particularly after the departure of the governess, when William and I resumed our spellings with my mother, and Jane roamed "fancy free." Lindley Murray and Geography by a Lady retired from our world, but a Mr Thompson who was teaching uncle Edward mathematics was engaged to continue our lessons in writing and cyphering. I had a turn for drawing, too, as was found by the alterations I made one rainy day in my young uncle's designs. He had been studying fortifications; his plans were said to be very neatly executed, but they were not finished to please me. I therefore extended the patches of colour laid on here and there, round the whole works, filled up vacant spaces, etc., and I wonder now when I know all the mischief I did how my good-natured uncle could ever have forgiven me, for he had been much flattered on his skill as a draughtsman. He blamed himself for

having left his plans within my reach, and for having given me leave to amuse myself with his paint-box. He got into a great scrape himself this spring. He slept in my mother's dressing-room, I being removed to Miss Gardiner's room. The shower-bath stood there, although my mother had given up the use of it, and it was supposed to be empty. We were all in this room at play with our uncle, and I suppose teasing him, for he suddenly caught up Jane, the most riotous of the set, and popped her into the shower-bath, threatening a ducking, and touching, to prove his sincerity, the string; down came the whole bucketful of water on the poor child's head! Both the man and the baby were frightened near to death. He actually waited till the deluge was over before his presence of mind returned, and then the piteous object he rescued, stunned almost and dripping! At last she spoke. "Oh my *soos*, my red *soos*!" it was a new pair put on that morning. I suppose no words ever gave more relief to an anxious listener. The hubbub brought my mother, who, in the impartial manner customary in nursery dealings at that time, scolded us all heartily. We three departed in tears to have "that naughty little girl" dried, leaving uncle Edward looking very sheepish.

My three maiden aunts were with us at this time, and uncle Ralph came for a short visit, then Mr and Mrs Leitch, all to take leave of poor uncle Edward, whom we observed begin to look very grave. He went often out in the carriage with my father, sometimes they remained away a long time, once, all day; and trunks came, and parcels to fill them, and Mrs Lynch was marking stockings, changing buttons, and sewing on strings for ever. She made also a long, large chintz housewife full of pockets, with a thread-case, and a curiously nicked leaf of scarlet flannel filled with needles; it was her modest offering to Mr Edward, who truly promised to keep it for her sake, for he showed it to me more than twenty years afterwards at his house at Camballa in Bombay.

At length came a sad day; all the eyes in the house

were red ; on meeting, every one talked with assumed cheerfulness on indifferent subjects, to which no one seemed really to attend. A sort of nervousness spread from old to young ; we children felt afraid of what was coming, and as the hours wore away the gloom spread. We were all in the dining-room when Mackenzie opened the door ; uncle Edward rose and kissed each child ; Mary was his darling, he doted on her with a love that never left him. " When shall I see you again, little woman ? " said he as he sat her down out of his arms ;—little any one there thought then where the next meeting would be, and when—his heart was too full for another word ; he folded my mother silently to his breast and followed my father out, while she fell back in a passion of tears very rare in a woman of her calm, reserved nature. I watched through the blind and saw them turn the corner of Sir Griffin Wilson's garden wall next door to us, my father leaning on my uncle's arm, and my uncle with his hat slouched over his brows and his head held down. It was my first idea of grief ; I had never lost anybody I had loved, and it was long ere even my gay spirits recovered from the first scene of distress I had noticed.

One of my employments at this time was to hold the skeins of cotton thread which my mother wound off neatly on two square pieces of card placed one over the other, so as to form eight corners between which the thread was secured. This cotton thread was a great invention, a wonderful improvement on the flax thread in previous use, which it was difficult to get of sufficient fineness for some works, and hardly possible to find evenly spun. When one thinks of the machine-spinning of these days, the cotton and flax threads like the fibres of spider's webs which we produce in tons weight now, we may indeed wonder at the difficulties in needlework overcome by our mothers.

Evenings at Home, Sandford and Merton, and a short Roman history in which very little mention was made of Tullia, were added to our library. In imitation of aunt Mary I began to take upon myself to tell fairy

tales to "the little ones," sometimes relating, sometimes embellishing, sometimes inventing, choosing historical heroes to place in situations of my own imagining, turning all occurrences into romance. We acted too occasionally, or played at ladies and gentlemen, copying the style of my mother's various visitors, supporting these characters for days together at our play-hours. We began to feel great interest in Shakespeare's plays, several of which we were taken to see, my father talking them over with us afterwards. I remember thinking they were all extemporised by the players as they proceeded in their parts, as we did ourselves in our own dramas, and wondering whether we should ever, any of us, attain to the dignified declamation of John Kemble.

This spring of 1804 aunt Mary had a long, serious illness; she was so weakened by it that country air was recommended, so she and aunt Fanny took lodgings at Richmond, and I was sent with them. We lived in the house of a widow who had a parrot which talked to me just as much as I wished, and a maid who was pleased to have my company on all her errands. I recollect perfectly, delighting in the view of the river with so many pretty boats on it and gardens down to its edge.

Mrs Bonner, our landlady, allowed me also to help her to make my aunts' puddings, the family preserves, pickles, etc., an honour I was extremely proud of. She lent me an old tea-caddy to put my work in; the sugar-bowl and canister had been broken, so the empty compartments exactly suited the patches I was engaged on, and made me as perfectly happy as if it had been the handsomest in the land. I was so improved by this visit to Richmond, that as my aunts determined on remaining there during the summer, my father resolved to leave his two youngest children near them under the care of Nurse Millar, in whom they had full confidence. Lodgings were taken for them not far from Mrs Bonner, where they were to sleep and be sent whenever my aunts were tired of them in the day.

William and I were to accompany our parents to the Doune.

I can't remember where aunt Lissy was all this time. I often recollect her with us, and then I miss her for long whiles. Though my father's house was nominally her home she was perfectly independent, being now of age, and inheriting all that would have been her mother's property by the will of her grandfather Raper. She had Twyford House, near Thorley Hall, in Hertfordshire, and a considerable sum of money from the savings during her minority. I have always heard her income called about £800 a year. She was not pretty, short, thick-set, plain features, with an agreeable expression and clear skin, and quiet manners. She was possessed of a good understanding, her temper was charming, yet she and my mother never got on well together. She had odd, quaint old-maidish ways adopted from old Raper relations, with whom she lived very much. She had also continued an acquaintance with school friends, the results of which appeared again. She certainly did not go with us this year to the Highlands.

We set off some time in July, my father and mother, William and I, Mrs Lynch and Mackenzie, in a new carriage—a sociable—with a cane body, a roof on four supports hung round with leather curtains, which we were continually letting down or tying up according to the weather, which we never managed to arrange in time for either wet or dry, and which, in spite of hooks and buttons let in the rain when the showers were heavy. A superior description of horses replaced the Smiler and Blackbird of former years, and the four bloods which formed the present team—two bays and two greys, cross-cornered—were driven by the smart coachman, William Millar, from the box. These horses for beauty were each a picture; they had cost proportionate sums, and they did their work, as the coachman said, “like jewels,” never giving in nor shirking when once started—but to make the start was the difficulty. Mr Coxe, named after his last master, and the most sedate of the set, merely indulged in a few

plunges ; but Highflier, the other bay, regularly lay down, and it took all the hostlers and half the post-boys at every inn, with plentiful applications of William Millar's long whip, to bring him to his feet again. He was cured of this trick afterwards by having lighted straw put under him. The two greys were merely awkward. Such a crowd as used to gather round us ! To add to the tumult, my mother, the most nervous woman in the world, kept screaming at the top of her voice all the time, standing up in the carriage and entreating all the collected mob to have pity on her and open the door. This scene continued during the journey, till we got quite accustomed to what had at first frightened William and me. We were pleased with the queer new carriage, glad to see our landlady acquaintance, the boats at Boroughbridge, and other recollected objects ; but we were not happy. We missed our little sisters, we talked over and over again when we were put to bed at night of all the tears shed on both sides at parting, particularly by poor Jane, who was a most affectionate little creature. William was long before he became reconciled to the want of his favourite companion, and I regretted equally dear Mary, my live doll. It was not till we reached the Doune that we at all got over this painful separation. We were a less time than usual upon the road, as we did not go to Houghton, and were but a short time in Edinburgh.

On this journey I first remember old Neil Gow being sent for to play to us at the inn at Inver—not Dunkeld—that little village we passed through, and went on to the ferry at Inver, which we crossed the following morning in a large boat. It was a beautiful ferry, the stream full and deep and dark, the banks overhung by fine timber trees, a glimpse of a newly-planted conical hill up the stream, only thick wooding the other way. I don't know whether this did not make more impression upon me than Neil Gow's delightful violin, though it had so over-excited me the night before that my father had had to take me a little walk by the river-side in the moonlight before I

was rational enough to be left to sleep. We were odd children, "full of nonsense," my mother said. Left to her, a good scold and a slap would have apparently quieted her little daughter, though a sleepless night would have left her but a poor object for the morrow. My father understood my temperament better. As for William, he took all in an easy Ironside way, remarking nothing but the peat reek, which neither he nor I had noticed before.

We passed a very happy season at the Doune. We did no lessons; we had a Jock Mackenzie to play with us in the stead of George Ross, who had been made a groom of. We rode on the old grey pony; we paid quantities of visits to our friends all through Rothiemurchus, and we often had a brace of muir-fowl for our dinner, each carving our bird. A dancing-master taught us every variety of wonderful Highland step—that is, he taught me, for William never could learn anything, though he liked hopping about to the fiddle—and we did "Merrily dance the quaker's wife" together, quite to the satisfaction of the servants who all took lessons too, in common with the rest of the population, the Highlanders considering this art an essential in the education of all classes, and never losing an opportunity of acquiring a few more flings and shuffles. The dancing-master had, however, other most distinguished pupils, the present Duke of Manchester and his elder sister, Lady Jane Montague, who were then living in our close neighbourhood with their grandmother, the Duchess of Gordon.

This beautiful and very cultivated woman had never, I fancy, lived happily with her duke. His habits and her temper not suiting, they had found it a wise plan to separate, and she had for the last few years spent her summers at a little farm on the Badenoch property, a couple of miles higher up the Spey than our Doune, and on the opposite side of the water. She inhabited the real old farmhouse of Kinrara, the same our good cousin Cameron had lived in, and where I have heard my mother say that the

Duchess was happier and more agreeable, and the society she gathered round her far pleasanter, than it ever was afterwards in the new cottage villa she built about a mile nearer to us. It was a sort of backwoods life, charming to young people amid such scenery, a dramatic emancipation from the forms of society that for a little while every season was delightful, particularly as there was no real roughing in it. In the "but" and the "ben," constituting the small farm cabin it was, she and her daughter Lady Georgina dwelt. By the help of white calico, a little whitewash, a little paint, and plenty of flowers they made their apartment quite pretty. What had been kitchen at one end of the house was elevated by various contrivances into a sitting-room; a barn was fitted up into a barrack for ladies, a stable for gentlemen; a kitchen was easily formed out of some of the out-offices, and in it, without his battery, without his stove, without his thousand-and-one assistants, and resources, her French cook sent up dinners still talked of by the few remaining partakers. The *entrées* were all prepared in one black pot—a large potato *chaudron*, which he had ingeniously divided within into four compartments by means of two pieces of tin-sheet crossed, the only inconvenience of this clever plan being that the company had to put up with all white sauces one day and all brown the next. Her favourite footman, Long James, a very handsome, impudent person, but an excellent servant for that sort of wild life, able to put his hand to any work, played the violin remarkably well, and as every tenth Highlander at least plays on the same instrument tolerably, there was no difficulty in getting up a highly satisfactory band on any evening that the guests were disposed for dancing. Half the London world of fashion, all the clever people that could be hunted out from all parts, all the north country, all the neighbourhood from far and near without regard to wealth or station, and all the kith and kin of both Gordons and Maxwells, flocked to this encampment in the wilderness during the fine autumns to enjoy the free life, the pure air, and the

wit and fun the Duchess brought with her to the mountains.

Lady Georgina Gordon, the youngest of the fair sisters of that, the last generation of the noble name, and the only one then unmarried, was much liked ; kind-hearted she has all through her life shown herself to be ; then, in her early youth, she was quiet and pleasing as well as lively. Unchangeable in amiability of manner, she was variable in her looks ; one day almost beautiful, the next, almost plain ; so my mother described her when she spoke of those merry doings in the old cottage at Kinrara in days quite beyond my memory. Lady Georgina had been some years married to the Duke of Bedford, and the Duchess of Gordon was living in her new house in this summer of 1804 when I first recollect them as neighbours. Our two dwellings were little more than a mile apart, but as I have said, the river was between us, a river not always in the mood for assisting intercourse. There were fords which allowed of carriage and pony communication at several points, but only when the water was low. At flood times passengers had to go down the stream to Inverdrue, or up the stream to near Loch Inch to the big boats, when they carried their vehicles with them ; those who walked could always find a little boat near every residence, and our ferries were in constant requisition, for no day passed without a meeting between the Doune and Kinrara. When the Duchess had miscalculated her supplies, or more guests arrived than she could possibly accommodate, the overplus as matter of course came over to us. Morning, noon, and night there was a coming and going. All our spare rooms were often filled even to the many beds in the barrack, and at Kinrara shakes-down in the dining-room and the sofas in the drawing-room were constantly resorted to for gentlemen who were too late for a corner in the "wooden room," a building erected a short way from the house in the midst of the birch thicket upon the banks.

Many changes had happened in our house since my

baby recollections. Old Donald was dead, old Christy was pensioned and settled with some relations in Duthil; Miss Jenny was married, my uncle Sandy's five sons were all sent about the world, and my father's first cousins, Logie and Glenmoriston, who used to be a good deal with us as bachelors, were both married and fixed in their beautiful homes. There were still the Captain and Mrs Grant at Inverdrue, and the Colonel at the Croft, and Mr Cameron at Kinapol, and there were at a little distance, up in Badenoch, old Invereshie and his wife, and young Belleville and his bride. Cluny beyond in Laggan; down the Spey, Castle Grant, Ballindalloch, Arndilly and Altyre; Moy, Burgie, etc., in Morayshire; parties from which houses were frequently with us—all except our Chief. I do not remember my father and mother going much from home this season, or indeed at all, except to Kinrara; they had not time, for so many English travellers were in the habit of making hotels of the houses of the Highland proprietors, there was a sort of running stream of them during the latter part of summer. Mrs Thrale and her daughters, and Mr and Mrs Murray Aust, my mother afterwards continued an acquaintance with. In general, these chance guests were hardly agreeable enough to be remembered.

William and I joined in all the fun of this gay summer. We were often over at Kinrara, the Duchess having perpetual dances, either in the drawing-room or the servants' hall, and my father returning these entertainments in the same style. A few candles lighted up bare walls at short warning, fiddles and whisky punch were always at hand, and the gentles and simples reeled away in company until the ladies thought the scene becoming more boisterous than they liked remaining in—nothing more, however—a Highlander never forgets his place, never loses his native inborn politeness, never presumes upon favour. We children sometimes displayed our accomplishments on these occasions in a prominent manner, to the delight, at any rate of our dancing-master. Lady Jane was really

clever in the Gillie Callum and the Shean Trews, I little behind her in the single and double fling, the shuffle and heel-and-toe step. The boys were more blundering, and had to bear the good-natured laugh of many a hard-working lass and lad who, after the toil of the day, footed it neatly and lightly in the ball-room till near midnight. Lord Huntly was the life of all these meetings; he was young, gay, handsome, fond of his mother, and often with her, and so general a favourite, that all the people seemed to wake up when he came amongst them.

There had been some coolness between my father and Castle Grant about election matters; the Chief and Chieftain differed in politics, and had in some way been opposed to each other, a difference that very foolishly had been allowed to influence their social relations. Many and many a family jar was caused in those times by the absurd violence of party feeling.

CHAPTER III

1805-1807

WE were now to travel back to London in the sociable, rather cold work in cold autumn weather. We had to drive unicorn, for one of the grey horses was gone; the other therefore had the honour of leading, a triangular style not then common, which ensured us an abundant amount of staring during our journey, a long one, for we made a round by the west country in order to pay two visits. My uncle Leitch had bought a pretty place near Glasgow, and made a handsome house out of the shabby one he found there by adding to the front a great building in very good taste. We two were quite astonished at the first aspect of Kilmerdinny. Large, wide steps led to a portico, a good hall, and then a circular saloon the height of the house, out of which all the rooms opened, those on the upper floor being reached by a gallery which ran round the saloon. Fine gardens, greenhouse, hothouses, hot walls, plenty of fruit, a lake with two swans on it—and *butter* at our breakfast—made us believe ourselves in Paradise! There was a beautiful drawing-room and a sunny little parlour, and a window somewhere above at which our handsome aunt appeared and threw out pears to us. We were sorry to go away, although there were no children to play with. The house was full of company, but they did not interfere with us, and when we did see any of these strangers they were very kind to us. But the day of departure came, the sociable was packed, and we set off for Tannoehside in Lanarkshire, near

the Clyde, near Hamilton, and about eight miles from Glasgow.

Uncle Ralph, my mother's second brother, had been bred to the law; he had entered the office of a friend, Mr Kinderley, an attorney of repute in London, but he never liked the business, and on one of his visits to aunt Leitch, an acquaintance of old standing with the heiress of Tennyochside suddenly blazed up into a love-fit on her side, which he, vain and idle, could not resist, and they were married. My poor aunt Judy, a good excellent woman, not the very least suited to him, plain in person, poor in intellect, without imagination or accomplishment, had not money enough to make up for the life of privation such a man had to lead with her. He was certainly punished for his mercenary marriage. Still, in an odd way of their own they got on, each valuing the other, though not exactly agreeing, save in two essential points—love for Tennyochside and for their two children. Eliza, the elder, was at this time exactly five years old, Edmund, still in arms, a mere baby. Here we had no fine house, but a very comfortable one, no finery, but every luxury, and the run through the woods or by the river-side was something like our own home to us. We did not like our cousin Eliza, though she was a pretty child, and seemingly fond of us; she was so petted, and spoiled and fretful, that she teased us. The night that I danced my Shean Trews—in a new pair of *yellow* (!) slippers bought at Perth on our way—she cried so much because she could not do the same, that she had to be sent to bed. Next day therefore I was sent for to help my aunt Judy in the storeroom, where she made the sweet things for the second course at dinner, and she had a great cry again; a lesson that did neither of us any good, for I was conceited enough without any additional flatteries, and she only ran away to the old parlour where her great-aunt old Miss Jopplin always sat, who petted her up into a sort of sulky good humour again. We did not leave Tennyochside with as much regret as we had quitted Kilmerdinny.

Aunt Mary and our two little sisters were in Lincoln's Inn Fields to receive us; how we flew to them! Jane and William were in ecstasies; they had always been inseparable play-fellows, and were overjoyed to be together again. Mary did not know us, at which I cried. She was amazingly grown, quite a large child, almost as tall as Jane and stouter, quiet, silent, and yet loved by all of us. Jane and William had a deal to say; she really was a boy in all her tastes; she played top, bat, leap-frog, fought, climbed trees, rode astride on the rocking-horse, and always put on her spencers and pinafores the wrong way to make believe they were jackets. I was forced to turn to Mary, who understood my quiet plays with my doll, her dress, and meals, and visitors. I daresay we were as happy as were our more boisterous companions, who, indeed, sometimes tamed down to associate with us. We were loving and happy children.

For the next three years we lived entirely in England; my father went north during this time once, if not twice, to look after various matters; none of us went with him. Our winters were passed in Lincoln's Inn Fields, our summers at Twyford, which place my father rented of my aunt Lissy, having let his own, Thorley. We were also one spring at Tunbridge Wells for my mother, whom I never remember well for long together. It must have been often dull for her. When she was well enough she diversified her sober life by taking us to the play, and me to the Hanover Square and other concerts. She very rarely went out to private parties. Once I remember sitting up to help her toilette on a grand occasion—a rout at the Duchess of Gordon's; the hours were then more rational than they are now, she was dressed and off by nine o'clock, very little later than my bedtime. Her appearance has often recurred to me, for she was very lovely; her gown was white satin trimmed with white velvet, cut in a formal pattern, then quite the rage, a copy from some of the Grecian borders in Mr Hope's book; she had feathers in her hair and a row of pearls round her neck,



JANE IRONSIDE (LADY GRANT).

from which depended a large diamond locket; the gown was short-waisted and narrow-skirted, but we thought it beautiful; a touch of rouge finished matters; and then Mrs Lynch, taking a candle, preceded her lady downstairs. My mother stooped to kiss me as she passed, and to thank me for holding the pins so nicely. The candle carried away, there remained another lit, which had been moved to a small table close to the wardrobe where Mrs Lynch had been searching for something wanted; a book lay near it, I took it up. It was the first volume of the Letters of Lady Hertford and Lady Pomfret, the old edition, good-sized print and not over many lines on the octavo page. I read a line, some more lines, went on, sat down; and there, Heaven knows how long afterwards, I was found tucked up in the arm-chair absorbed in my occupation, well scolded of course—that followed as a matter of necessity for wasting the candle when every one supposed me to be in bed; why my nurse did not see that I was safe there she did not explain. I was half afraid to allude to my book in the morning, but finding no complaints had been made, took courage and asked permission to read it, which being readily granted, many a happy hour was spent over those delightful volumes. They were read and read again, and my father, finding I understood them, and could give a good reason for preferring Lady Hertford's charming way of telling her home news to the more exciting letters of her travelling correspondent, gave me Lady Mary Wortley Montague. We were also introduced this spring of 1805 or 6, I am not sure which, to Miss Edgeworth's Parent's Assistant, and the Arabian Tales. I somehow mix up the transactions of these three years, recollecting only the general progress we made and confusing the details; the three winters in London are all jumbled up together, the summers stand out more prominently.

Our principal London pleasure was the play, to which we went frequently, generally to Covent Garden, which we soon learned to consider as more decidedly

our house. We had the Duke of Bedford's private box, sometimes meeting the Duchess of Gordon there, which we liked above all things, for then we had ices, fruits, and cakes in the little ante-room adjoining. In spite of all these amusements, the first note of preparation for the country caused a sort of delirium in our nursery; it was as if we had been prisoners expecting freedom, so much more natural to the young are green fields and shady lanes than the confinement of a city.

In the spring of 1805 we went for a few weeks to Tunbridge Wells, while some of the servants were getting Twyford ready. We lodged in a gloomy house near the Pantiles, with no garden, only a courtyard before it, which got very slippery in showery weather; but M. Beckvelt, our good old French master, was with us, and took us long wandering walks over the heath, and to the rocks, and up to Sion Hill, as happy as we were ourselves, as much a child too. He laughed and chattered French, and ran and climbed and gathered flowers as we did, always in the tight nankins, with the snuff-box and the powdered hair. I know not what he had been before the Revolution in his own country—only a *bourgeois* he told us—but he was a dear, kind old man, like the good fathers or tutors we read about in *L'Ami des Enfants*. He brought some *Contes de Fées* down with him to Tunbridge, with which we got on very quickly; we made, however, greater progress in *Le Boulanger*, which we danced on the heath like witches, screaming out the chorus like possessed things; the people must have thought us crazy when any passed our magic circle.

The remainder of this summer, and the two summers following, 1806 and 1807, we spent entirely at Twyford, the winters in London, as I said before, never all this time going near the Highlands. My father took a run to the north when he thought it necessary, but my mother was glad to remain quiet with her children in the south, which part of the world, I think, she had begun to prefer to her more romantic

home, now that the novelty of her Highland life had worn off a little.

Twyford was one of the most comfortable, modernised old residences that any one need wish to live in. It was ugly enough on the outside, a heavy, square, red brick building with little windows and dumpy chimneys; a small, squat dome upon the top, within which was a great church clock, and an observatory stuck up at one end like an ear, or a tall factory chimney, ending in a glass lantern. In front was a small bit of shrubbery hardly hiding the road, and beyond a short double avenue of lime trees stretching across a green field; behind was a more extensive shrubbery and flower-garden, divided by a light railing from pretty meadows dotted over with fruit trees. On one side was a walled garden and the farm offices, on the other the kitchen court, stables and stable-yard, and an immense flour mill, all upon the river Stort, a sluggish stream moving along, canal fashion, close to the premises. Barges heavily laden plied all day long backwards and forwards on this dingy water, and as there was a lock just underneath the laundry windows, scenes as merry as those in the broom island took place on the flat banks of the lazy Stort among the barge-men, the dusty millers, and the men and maids of the kitchen court. To the elder part of the family all this commotion must have been a nuisance, to us children such noisy doings were a delight. We had a post of observation contrived by ourselves in the middle of the wide yew hedge which bounded the back shrubbery on the river-side, and there, from what we called our summer parlour, we made many more observations than were always agreeable to the observed. There was a large establishment of servants, and no very steady head over them, for Lynch had married Mackenzie, and they had gone to keep the inn at Aviemore, a melancholy change for us little people; but we had to bear a worse.

In the summer of 1806 aunt Lissy married. Her particular friend was a Miss Susan Frere, who had

been her favourite companion at the school in Queen's Square where she had been educated. Miss Frere's father, a gentleman of consideration in the county of Norfolk, had seven sons, and it was his fourth son, George, who was lucky enough to gain the heart of one of the best of women. The courtship had begun by means of letters through the sister; it had been carried on at the Hanover Square concert rooms at rare intervals, for no one was aware of the progress of this seldom-noticed lover till the engagement was announced. My mother thought the pair had met in Wimpole Street, and Mrs Raper was sure he visited at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and both houses felt amazed at such an affair having been managed unknown to either. The first time that I became aware of what was going on was one day in the spring before our removal to Twyford in 1806. I was sitting near an open window in the front drawing-room beside my aunt Lissy, who had been ill, and was only sufficiently recovered to be nursed up carefully. Some humble friend had called to see her, and while they were conversing on their charity affairs, I was amusing myself watching the progress along the dead wall which supported the terrace walk of the Lincoln's Inn gardens, of the tall Mr Frere who had lately begun to come among us, and whose nankins always attracted me. As I expected, he was lost to sight for a moment only to emerge the brighter, for he soon appeared round the corner of the Griffin Wilsons' garden, and across our courtyard up to the door. His knock brought the colour into my aunt's pale face; she also dismissed the humble friend, and then, forgetting me, she rose briskly to receive Mr Frere, and told him laughing how she had sent away an inconvenient third. Of course my turn soon came, but I was so busy arranging all my conjectures that they had to tell me twice to run away and play before I recollected to obey. When I reached the nursery I announced without more ado the impending marriage, which soon after was officially proclaimed. Both bride and bridegroom set about the preparations for their change of

condition in a quiet, straightforward, business-like manner that much amused my mother and my aunt Mary. Mr Frere took a house in Brunswick Square, which aunt Lissy went with him to see. After due consideration they decided on buying all the furniture left in it by the late proprietor, to which my aunt added a great deal belonging to her from the stores at Twyford of beautiful Indian wares, and all that she had gathered together for her own comfort while her home was with us. Her bedroom looked very bare when all in it belonging to her had left it; and the back drawing-room we always lived in, deprived of pictures, flower-stands, bookcases, china and other pretty things, with a really nice collection of books, was nearly empty, and it never quite recovered the loss, for my mother had no turn for adornments; she kept a clean house, a good table, a tidy room, always putting in the stitch in time, but she did not care for knick-knacks, at least she did not care to buy them; parting with them was a different affair; she was angry at the loss of what she had been used to see around her, and while my imperturbable aunt Lissy day by day continued her dismantlings and her careful packings, my mother's surprise grew to indignation, as Jane and I were quick enough to find out by means of certain mysterious conversations between her and aunt Mary. They fancied that the low tone in which they spoke and the curious language they employed effectually veiled the meaning of their gossip; instead, therefore, of sending us away when they had private communications to make, they merely bid us go to some other part of the room, while they tried to conceal the subject of their whisperings by the ingenious addition of "*vus*" to every word they spoke, as "*Didvus youvus evervus hearvus ofvus,*" etc. At first we supposed this was another continental language different from French, which we were ourselves learning, but the proper names sometimes used instead of *hevus* *shevus* gave us a clue to the cypher, which soon enabled us to translate it.

Our first summer at Twyford had been very happy,

both our aunts, Mary and Lissy, were with us, and cousin James Griffith, who was a great favourite. The queer old house particularly pleased us; there was the long garret under the roof, a capital place for romping, and such hiding-places!—the great clock chamber, turrets and turret stairs, observatory and crooked corners, and odd closets, all charming! then such a yew hedge! a famous gravel-walk beside it, a garden so well stocked, such an orchard, fruits hardly known by more than sight showering down their treasures when we shook the trees. Another amusement of that first year was bat-hunting; the house had been so long shut up, so little looked after, that the cellars and even the kitchen offices were actually swarming with bats; they hung down from the rafters in hundreds, and were infinitely more hard to dislodge than the mice in the Highlands. We were so used to them flapping about our ears within and without after dark, that even the servants gave up complaining of them, and only that they were unpleasant to the sense of smell, vigorous war would hardly have been waged against them. We had merry walks, too, through the fields, a firm pathway, and stile after stile all the way to Bishop's Stortford; and in the autumn such nutting parties, the hedges full of blackberries, sloes, nuts, and bullaces; and then the walnuts! we were stained to the colour of gipsies. The second summer was even happier, for good M. Beckvelt came for a month or more. He took us long walks all over the country, to Thorley Wood and Thorleyhurst, and among the pretty shady lanes abounding in every direction. We preferred him to the nursery-maids, for he really had no pleasure but ours.

The peasantry were uninteresting, so after a few cottage visits we gave up any attempt at acquaintance in that sphere, but the fields were charming. We went to church at Thorley always, sitting in the old Raper pew, and so pretty was that old church, so very pretty the old Raper Hall in which my father's tenant Mr Voules lived, that we used to wonder we did not live there ourselves. Mr Frere came frequently to see us,

and sometimes a tall brother with him. These were our gala days, for they played bat and ball, battledoor and shuttlecock, cricket, hunt the slipper, puss in the corner, and a hundred other games, which they had the knack of making every one, young and old, join in out on the lawn in the back shrubbery, under the shade of a fine chestnut tree. They seldom came either without a cargo of presents for the children; the clan Frere therefore was so much in favour that we hardly regretted the parting from our kind aunt, little understanding then how much our childish happiness had depended on the little quiet woman who seemed to be of no account.

Our dear aunt Lissy had never interfered with the baby, little Mary. She was now at three years of age Mrs Millar's principal charge and my mother's pet. We three elder ones had been her care, and how she had managed us we only found out by comparing it with the mismanagement that followed. Having few lessons and no employment but such as we contrived for ourselves, our play-hours were so many as to tire us, our tempers suffered, and Mrs Millar, not possessing the best herself, sadly annoyed ours. I was active, pert, violent, Jane indolent and sulky, William impracticable, never out of humour, but quietly and thoroughly self-willed. One mode was applied to all; perpetual fault-finding, screams, tears, sobs, thumps, formed the staple of the nursery history from this time forward. We were as little upstairs as we could help, though we were not always much better off below, for if my mother or aunt Mary were not in the vein for hearing our lessons, they had little patience with our mistakes or our questions; my mother would box our ears with her pretty white hand, and aunt Mary had a spiteful fillip with the thimble-finger which gave a painful sting; bursts of crying, of course, followed, when the delinquents were despatched to dark closets, where they were sometimes forgotten for hours. There was no kind Mrs Lynch to watch us, steal to our prison door and carry us off to her room to be employed and kept

from mischief. She was as great a loss as aunt Lissy, in one particular—a serious matter to me, my breakfast—a greater. Our nursery breakfast was ordered, without reference to any but Houghton customs, to be dry bread and cold milk the year round, with the exception of three winter months, when in honour of our Scotch blood we were favoured with porridge; the meal came from Scotland with the kegs of butter and barrels of eggs and bags of cheese, etc., but it was boiled by the English maids in any but north country fashion. Had we been strong children this style of food might have suited us, many large healthy families have thriven on the like; but though seldom ailing, we inherited from my father a delicacy of constitution demanding great care during our infancy. In those days it was the fashion to take none; all children alike were plunged into the coldest water, sent abroad in the worst weather, fed on the same food, clothed in the same light manner. From the wintry icy bath aunt Lissy had saved us; our good nurse Herbert first, and then Mrs Lynch, had always made us independent of the hated milk breakfast; but when they were gone and the conscientious Mrs Millar, my mother's "treasure," reigned alone, our life was one long misery, at least to William and me who were not favourites. In town, a large, long tub stood in the kitchen court, the ice on the top of which had often to be broken before our horrid plunge into it; we were brought down from the very top of the house, four pair of stairs, with only a cotton cloak over our night-gowns, just to chill us completely before the dreadful shock. How I screamed, begged, prayed, entreated to be saved, half the tender-hearted maids in tears beside me; all no use, Millar had her orders (so had our dear Betty, but did she always obey them?). Nearly senseless I have been taken to the housekeeper's room, which was always warm, to be dried; there we dressed, without any flannel, and in cotton frocks with short sleeves and low necks. Revived by the fire, we were enabled to endure the next bit of martyrdom, an hour upon the low sofa, so many yards

from the nursery hearth, our books in our hands, while our cold breakfast was preparing. My stomach entirely rejecting milk, bread and tears generally did for me, a diet the consequences of which soon manifested themselves. From being a bright, merry, though slight, child, I became thin, pale and peaky, and woefully changed in disposition, slyness being added to my natural violence, as I can recollect now with shame. William told fibs by the dozen, because he used to be asked whether he had done, or not done, so and so, and did not dare answer truthfully on account of the severity of the punishments to which he was subjected. We began all our ill-behaviour soon after aunt Lissy's marriage. On my father's return from his canvass in Morayshire he received bad accounts of our misconduct. The recapitulation of all our offences to my father drove us to despair, for we loved him with an intensity of affection that made his good opinion essential to our happiness; we also dreaded his sternness, all his judgments being *à la* Brutus, nor did he ever remit a sentence once pronounced. The milk rebellion was crushed immediately; in his dressing-gown, with his whip in his hand, he attended our breakfast—the tub at this season we liked, so he had no occasion to superintend the bathing—but that disgusting milk! He began with me; my beseeching look was answered by a sharp cut, followed by as many more as were necessary to empty the basin; Jane obeyed at once, and William after one good hint. They suffered less than I did; William cared less, he did not enjoy this breakfast, but he could take it; Jane always got rid of it, she had therefore only hunger to endure; I, whose stomach was either weaker or stronger, had to bear an aching head, a heavy, sick painful feeling which spoilt my whole morning, and prevented any appetite for dinner, where again we constantly met with sorrow. Whatever was on the table we were each to eat, no choice was allowed us. The dinners were very good, one dish of meat with vegetables, one tart or pudding. On broth or fish days no pudding, these days were therefore not in favour;

but our *maigre* days, two in the week during summer, we delighted in, fruit and eggs being our favourite dishes. How happy our dinner hour was when aunt Lissy was with us! a scene of distress often afterwards. My mother never had such an idea as that of entering her nursery, when she wanted her children or her maids she rang for them; aunt Mary, of course, had no business there; the cook was pretty sure of this, the broth got greasy, the vegetables heavy with water, the puddings were seldom brown. Mrs Millar allowed no orts, our shoulders of mutton—we ate all the shoulders—were to be cut fair, fat and lean, and to be eaten fair, a hard task for Jane and me. The stomachs which rejected milk could not easily manage fat except when we were under the lash, then indeed the fat and the tears were swallowed together; but my father could not always be found to act overseer, and we had sometimes a good fight for it with our upright nurse, a fight ending in victory as regarded the fat, though we suffered in another way the pains of defeat, as on these occasions we were deprived of pudding; then, if I were saucy, or Jane in a sulky fit, the scene often ended in the dark closet, where we cried for an hour or more, while William and little Mary finished the pudding.

This barbarity lasted only a short time, owing to my ingenious manufacture of small paper bags which we concealed in our laps under the table, and took opportunities of filling with our bits of fat; these we afterwards warily disposed of, at Twyford through the yew hedge into the river, in town elsewhere.

Another serious grief we had connected with our food. We could refuse nothing that was prepared for us; if we did we not only got nothing else, but the dish declined was put by to appear again at the next meal, and be disposed of before we were permitted to have what else there was. Jane greatly disliked green vegetables, spinach or cabbage in particular; it was nature speaking (poor nature! so unheeded in those times), for these plants disagreed with her, yet she must eat them. I have known a plate of spinach kept for her

from dinner one day to supper the next, offered at each meal and refused, and not even a bit of bread substituted all those long hours, till sheer hunger got the better of her dislike, and she gave herself a night of sickness by swallowing the mess. Fancy a young child kept thirty hours without food and then given poison! the dungeons of feudal times were in their degree not more iniquitous than these proceedings.

Of course under this *régime* the rhubarb bottle became a necessity in the nursery. I had my French beans antipathy, and it was to be overcome in the same way, followed by the same cure for its effects. In addition to the dose of rhubarb, nauseous enough in itself, our breakfast on medicine mornings was water gruel—I can see it now, unstrained, thick, black, and seasoned with salt; this frightful bowl gave me an obstinate fit in Jane's style, from which I suffered in the same way; breakfast, dinner, and supper passed, and the cold gruel remained untouched; faint from hunger I lay down in the evening on the floor of the closet where I had passed the summer's day, and sobbed out that I wished to die! One of the housemaids on her tour of window-shutting, a Hertfordshire girl named Sally Withan, whom I remember with gratitude to this hour, unturned the key which kept me prisoner, and threw beside me some red-streaked apples. I have loved apples ever since. Good-humoured, rosy-cheeked Sally Withan! She said if she could find that nasty gruel, it should not plague her sweet young lady no more, she'd answer for it! I was not slow to give the hint, and certainly on being called to bed, whither I went without a kiss or a good-night or even appearing downstairs, fresh gruel, better it seemed to me, warm at any rate, and a slice of bread, were thankfully received after the miserable day of fasting.

Even poor little Mary did not escape the Spartan rules of my father's discipline; for her baby errors she had to bear her punishment. She used to be set on the lowest step of the stair at "naughty times," and not be allowed to move from there till permission was given.

One night my father forgot her, so, I suppose, had every one else, for on ringing for wine and water at midnight, the footman who brought it up found the poor little thing lying there asleep. She had sat there since dinner. We used to comfort one another in our troubles when we could manage it, and many a "goody" the good children secreted and carried to be given with kisses and hugs to the poor desolate culprit, who all the time believed him or herself to be disgracefully guilty.

This is the dark side of the picture ; we had very happy hours as well ; despotically as we were ruled in some respects, we were left in other ways to our own devices. We disposed of our time very much according to our own fancies, subject to certain rules. We were always to appear at the breakfast-table of our father and mother some time between ten and eleven o'clock ; the last of the three regular ringings of my father's dressing-room bell was our signal for leaving our plays ; we ran off to brush our hair, wash our hands, and seize our books, with which provided we repaired to the breakfast-room, where our duties were to run messages ; in summer to amuse ourselves quietly till called upon to stir ; in winter to make the toast. Breakfast over, we said our few lessons to my mother, and read in turns. I was supposed to have practised the pianoforte early. If we were wanted again during the day we were sent for, though frequently we spent the whole morning in the drawing-room, where we employed ourselves as we liked, provided we made no noise. The prettily-wound cotton balls had already superseded the skeins, so that we were saved that piece of business. In the hot summer days aunt Mary often read to us fairy tales, or bits from the *Elegant Extracts*, latterly Pope's *Homer*, which with her explanations we enjoyed extremely, all but the *Shield of Achilles*, the long description of which I feared was never to end. When my father was away my mother dined with us early, and in the evenings we took long drives in the open landau and four. When he was at home, and the late dinner proceeded in full form

—and what a tedious ceremony it was!—we all appeared at the dessert, or rather at the second course, in full dress like the footmen. We sat in a row—we four, little Mary and all, on four chairs placed against the wall—trained to perfect quiet; we were to see and to smell, but to taste nothing, to hear and not to speak; but on the dessert appearing we were released, called forward to receive a little wine, a little fruit, and a biscuit, and then to have our game at romps; the riot generally forced our nervous mother to retire, and then quite at ease, in good earnest began the fun.

Sometimes my father was an ogre groping about for little children, whom he caught and *tickled* nearly into fits; sometimes he was a sleeping giant whom we besieged in his castle of chairs, could hardly waken, and yet dreaded to hear snore. Whatever the play was it was always charming, and redeemed all troubles. We looked forward to this happy hour as to a glimpse of heaven; milk, cabbage, fat, rhubarb, and gruel were all forgotten, and the whippings too; he was no longer the severe master, he was the best of play-fellows. We dreaded hearing of his absence, as all our joy went with him; we hailed his return as our chief blessing. He soon found out that no punishment had such effect upon any of us as exclusion from the romping hour. Once or twice it was my fate to remain upon my chair in that row against the wall, while the romp went on around me; to be told to remain there as unworthy of my share in the fun. I don't think I ever needed a third lesson, although the faults had not been very heinous; the most flagrant was my having provided myself with a private store of apples, gathered only from underneath the trees, but concealed in one of the queer little triangular cupboards scattered up and down the turret stairs, and intended to furnish out our play banquets up in the haunted attic. The summer of 1807 was the last we spent at Twyford.

Just before leaving town we had seen our dear aunt Lissy's little boy, poor John Frere, a fine plain, healthy baby, when as a secret I was told to expect a little

brother or sister shortly at home, for whose arrival many preparations were making. Jane hemmed some new soft towels for it—very badly—and I made all the little cambric shirts so neatly, that I was allowed to begin a sampler as a reward, and to go to Bishop's-Stortford to buy the canvas and the coloured worsteds necessary.

My father had been in the north. Parliament had been dissolved, and he had set up for Morayshire; his opponent was Colonel Francis Grant, the second son of his Chief, who had all the Tory interest and a deal of clannish help besides; feudal feeling being still strong in the Highlands, although personally there was no doubt as to the popularity of the two candidates. My father ran up to within two votes of his cousin; all the consolation he had for setting the county in a flame, losing his time, wasting his money, and dividing irremediably the House of Grant against itself. Years before he had canvassed Inverness, Sir James giving all his interest to the East India Director, Charles Grant, who to secure his seat promised my father unlimited Indian appointments if he would give in. This was the secret of my father's Indian patronage, through which he provided ultimately for so many poor cadets. How much each of such appointments cost him unluckily he never calculated. He was very little cast down by his ill success.

My father turned the remainder of his time in the Highlands to farming account, for he was exceedingly interested in agriculture, particularly anxious to open the eyes of the Hertfordshire people, who at that time pursued the most miserable of the old-fashioned English systems. The first year we went to Twyford he had established a Scotch grieve there; he built a proper set of offices, introduced rotation crops, deep ploughing, weeding, hay made in three days, corn cut with a scythe, and housed as cut, cattle stall-fed; and I remember above all a field of turnips that all, far and near, came to look and wonder at—turnips in drills, and two feet apart in the rows, each turnip the size of a

man's head. It was the first such field ever seen in those parts, and so much admired by two-footed animals that little was left for the four-footed. All the lanes in the neighbourhood were strewn with the green tops cut off by the depredators. The Scotch farming made the Hertfordshire bumpkins stare, but it produced no imitators during the short period it was tried by us. The speculation did not enrich the speculator. We ate our own mutton, poultry, and vegetables in town, as well as in the country, the market-cart coming to Lincoln's Inn Fields weekly with all supplies; we had a cow, too, in the London stables, changed as required. But Mr Reid got to drink too much gin, Mrs Reid lay in bed in the mornings and saw company in the evenings. The laundry-maids also entertained a large acquaintance with the dairy produce, for they united the two conditions; so that though we lived in luxury we paid well for it, made no friends, and were cheated by our servants, for besides the liberal way in which they helped themselves they neglected their master's business.

My father had gone to the Trysts after losing Moray, and bought a large drove of fine young black cattle, for no small penny. These were sent south under the care of two Highland drovers. The fine field of turnips during the winter and the rich grass of the Hertfordshire meadows being expected to feed such beef for the London market as, to say the truth, the English people of that day had little notion of. There were above a hundred head; they were put to rest in the small paddock between the orchard and the river bordered on the shrubbery side by the *yew* hedge. Poor beasts! I forget how many survived; it was heart-breaking to see them next day lying about the field dying from the effects of the poison.

This unfortunate business disgusted my father with his English improvements; at least after this summer we never saw Twyford again. He sold Thorley Hall to Lord Ellenborough for £20,000, I have heard, £10,000 of which bought Kinloss near Forres, the remainder helping off the accounts of the Morayshire canvass.

CHAPTER IV

1701-1808

THE Rapers are an old Buckinghamshire family of Norman descent, as their name anciently spelt Rapier attests. Where they came from, or when they came, or what they were, I really do not know, but so strong a leaven of Puritanism pervaded the Christian names of the family, that I cannot but think they were known in the days of the Commonwealth for more stirring deeds than suited them in after-times; they descended to us as scientific men, calm, quiet, retired, accomplished oddities. How any of them came to settle in Hertfordshire was not explained, but it so happened that two brothers established themselves in that county within a mile of one another; Matthew at Thorley Hall, John at Twyford. Matthew never married, John took to wife Elizabeth [Hale, daughter of Elizabeth] Beaumont, descended in the direct line from Sir John Beaumont, the author of Bosworth Field and the elder brother of the dramatist. I remember mentioning this with no little pride to Lord Jeffrey, when he answered quietly he would rather himself be able to claim kindred with Fletcher; and soon after he announced in one of his reviews that Beaumont was but the French polish upon the fine sound material of Fletcher—or something to that effect; which may be true, though at this distance of time, I don't see how such accurate division of labour could be tested; and what would the rough material have been unpolished? I myself believe that Beaumont was more than the varnish, he was the edge-tool too,

and I am proud of such parentage, and value the red bound copy of Bosworth Field with my great [great] grandmother's name in it, and the little silver sugar-basket with the Lion of England in the centre of it, which she brought with her into the Raper family.

She must have been a person of acquirements too, for her death so affected her husband that he was never seen out of his own house afterwards. I do not know how he managed the education of his only child, my grandmother; for she was well educated in a higher style than was common then, and yet he lived on at Twyford alone almost, except for visits from a few relations.

His horses died in their stables, his carriages decayed in their coach-houses, his servants continued with him till their marriage or death, when the supernumeraries were not replaced, and he lived on year after year in one uniform round of dulness till roused by the arrival of his grandchildren.

Aunt Lissy did not remain long with him, but my father was his charge till his death. He did not appear to have devoted himself to him, and yet the boy was very constantly his companion within doors, for all the old man's queer methodical ways had impressed themselves vividly on his grandson's mind. When altering the house my father would permit no change to be made in the small room on the ground-floor of the hall, which had been his grandfather's dressing-room, and which was now his own.

We often attended on my father towards the end of his toilet, on the third ringing of that bell—a sound that acted through our house like the “sharp” in the royal palaces, sending every one to his duty in all haste—and there we found the same oddly contrived wardrobe which had been made so many years ago. Two or three broad shelves were below, and underneath the lowest one a row of small pegs for hanging boots and shoes on; at the top were a number of pigeon-holes, employed by my father for holding papers, but which in Raper days had held each the proper supply of linen for one day;

shirt, stock, stockings, handkerchief, all along in a row, tier after tier. My great-grandfather began at No. 1 and went regularly through the pigeon-holes, the washer-woman refilling those he had emptied. This methodical habit pervaded all his actions ; he walked by rule at stated times, and only in his garden, and for a definite period ; so many times round the formal *parterre*, bounded by the yew-tree hedge. He did not, however, interrupt his thoughts to count his paces, he filled a pocket of his flapped waistcoat with so many beans, and each time that he passed the door he dropped a bean into a box placed upon the sill of the window for the purpose of receiving them ; when the beans had all been dropped the walk was done.

He was a calm and placid man, and acted like oil on waves to the impatient spirit he had to deal with. Some baby fury had excited my father once to that degree, he took a fine handkerchief that had been given to him and threw it angrily upon the fire, then seeing the flames rise over it, he started forward as suddenly to rescue it. " No, Jack," said his grandfather, " let it burn, the loss of a handkerchief is little, the loss of temper is much ; watch it burning and try to remember what irremediable mischief an uncontrolled temper works." My father said this scene often recurred to him and checked many a fit of passion, fortunately, as his Highland maid Christy and others did their best to spoil him.

The Thorley brother, Matthew, was quite as eccentric as my great-grandfather ; they were much together, and he it was who built the observatory at Twyford, that when he dined there and took a fancy to consult the stars, he need not have to return home to spend an hour with them. He was a true lover of learning ; he had built a large room to hold his books at Thorley. The best of those we loved so much at the Doune came from thence, and the maps and prints and volumes of rare engravings, coins, mathematical instruments, and curiosities.

He played on both violin and violoncello. Our poor

cousin George Grant took possession of the violoncello, on which he was a proficient. The violin was lent to Duncan Macintosh, who enlarged the sound-holes, as he thought the tone of this Cremona too low for the proper expression of Highland music!

There was an observatory at Thorley too, from whence my great-uncle surveyed the earth as well as the heavens; a favourite occupation of his being the care of some grass walks he was very particular in defending from the feet of passengers.

He had planted a wood at a short distance from his house, laid out a kind of problem in action; an oval pond full of fish for centre, and gravel walks diverging from it at regular intervals towards an exterior square; the walks were bordered by very wide turf edging, and thick plantations of young trees were made between. It was a short cut through this mathematical plantation from one farmhouse to another, and in rainy weather the women in their pattens destroyed the grass borders when they disobeyed the order to keep to the gravel path.

From his tower of observation Matthew Raper detected every delinquent, and being provided with a speaking-trumpet, no sooner did a black gipsy bonnet and red cloak beneath it appear on the forbidden edge, than "Of with your pattens" echoed in rough seaman's voice to the terror of the sinners.

These two old brothers, the one a bachelor, the other a widower, had their hearts set upon the same earthly object, the only child of the one, my grandmother. To judge of her from the fragments of her journals, her scraps of poetry, some copied, some original, her pocket-books full of witty memoranda, her receipt-books, songs, and the small library, in each volume of which her name was beautifully written, she must have been an accomplished woman and passing clever, with rather more than a touch of the coarseness of her times.

She had a temper! for dear, good Mrs Sophy used to tell us, as a warning to me, how every one in her

household used to fly from her presence when it was up, hiding till the brief storm was over. She was not handsome, short in figure, with the Raper face, and undecided complexion; but she had lovers. In early youth a cousin Harry figured in her private MS., he must have been the Admiral's father; and after came a more serious business, an engagement to Bishop Horsley; there was an illness, and when the heiress recovered she married her Doctor!—my grandfather—whether with or without the consent of her family I do not know; it certainly was not with their approbation, for they looked on my grandfather as a mere adventurer, and did not thoroughly forgive my grandmother for years; not till my great-uncle Rothie, with his graceful wife, came to London to visit their brother the Doctor, when the Raper connection was relieved to see that the honour of the alliance was at least mutual.

Although my grandfather lived to get into great practice as a physician, his income at the time of his marriage was not considerable; the Raper addition to it was extremely welcome. Her father allowed Mrs Grant a guinea a day, paid punctually to herself in advance on the first of the month in a little rouleau of gold pieces; as I understood, this was never promised, but never failed. The uncle at Thorley, too, kindly assisted the housekeeping. On New Year's Day he regularly gave or sent his niece a piece of plate and a hundred pounds, so regularly that she quite reckoned on it, unwisely; for one day the uncle, talking with her confidentially upon the Doctor's improved ways and means, trusting matters were really comfortable; "Oh dear, yes," replied she; "fees are becoming plenty, and the lectures bring so much, and my father gives so much, and then, uncle, there is your hundred pounds." "True, niece," answered the odd uncle, and to the day of his death he never gave her another guinea! He saved all the more for my father, little thinking all his hoards were destined for that odious S—— G—— and the electors of Great Grimsby.

My grandfather and grandmother were married



MISS RAPER (AFTERWARDS WIFE OF DR WILLIAM GRANT).

twelve years before they had a child, then came my father, and four years after, in giving birth to my aunt Lissy, her mother died. The Highlanders saw the hand of a rewarding providence in the arrival of these children to a lonely home, my grandmother having signally approved herself in their eyes by her behaviour on a memorable occasion ; I don't know how they accounted, on the same principles, for her early death in the midst of these blessings.

The visit that the Laird and the Lady of Rothiemurchus had paid to Doctor and Mrs Grant at their large house in Lime Street was to be returned, but, after repeated delays, his professional business preventing the Doctor from taking such a holiday, his wife was to go north without him, but with his younger brother, Alexander the clergyman, who was then curate at Henley, where he had been for some time with his wife and her sister Miss Neale. Besides his clerical duties, he at this time took pupils, who must have been at home for the holidays, when he could propose to take his wife and his sister-in-law to the Highlands.

My great-uncle Rothie was unluckily living at Elgin, his delicate wife having found the mountain air too keen for her, but the object of the journey being principally to see Rothiemurchus, the English party proceeded there under the charge of their cousin, Mr James Cameron, of Kinrara, Kinapol, and latterly, in my remembrance, of the Croft.

My grandmother rode up from Elgin on a pillion behind Mr Cameron. She wore high-heeled, pointed-toed shoes, with large rosettes, a yellow silk quilted petticoat, a chintz sacque or fardingale bundled up behind, and a little black hat and feather stuck on one side of her powdered head. She sang the Beggar's Opera through during the journey with a voice of such power that Mr Cameron never lost the recollection of it. One of the scenes they went to view was that from the churchyard ; the old church is beautifully situated on a rising ground in a field not far from the house of

the Doune, well backed by a bank of birch wooding, and commanding a fine prospect both up and down the valley of the Spey. My grandmother looked round in admiration, and then, turning to Mr Caméron, she lamented in simple good faith that the Laird had no son to inherit such a property. "Both a loss and a gain," said Mrs Alexander in a blithe voice, "the parson and I have five fine sons to heir it for him." Poor woman! she outlived them all, and the following year my grandmother produced the delicate boy, whose birth ended their expectations.

The Doctor and his rather eccentric true Raper wife lived happily together, save for a slight occasional coolness on his part, and some extra warmth now and then on hers. From the time of her death, Mrs Sophy told us, he never entered her drawing-room, where all remained precisely as she had left it; her harpsichord on one side of the fireplace, and her Japan cabinet on the other, both remained locked: her bookcases were undisturbed; a small round table that held a set of egg-shell china out of which her favoured guests had received their tea, had been covered with a cambric handkerchief by his own hand, and no one ventured to remove the veil. All her wardrobe, which was rich, and her trinkets, were left as she had left them, never touched till they were packed in chests when he left London, which chests were not opened till aunt Lissy came of age, and then the contents were divided between her and my father.

More than all, he laid aside his violin: they had been long married before she knew he played. She had seen the violin in its case, and wondered what it did there. At last she asked, and was surprised and pleased to find him no mean performer. How very odd, how individualised were the people of those old days! On the death of her whom he had never seemed to care to please, he laid aside the instrument he had really loved, nor ever resumed it till he retired to the Doune, when my father remembered his often bringing sweet music from it in an evening. I can't

tell why, but I was always much interested in those old-world days.

My father never liked speaking of his childhood, it had probably not been happy; he was reserved, too, on matters of personal feeling. Not till I had nearly grown up did I hear much from him of his boyhood, and even then it was drawn from him by my evident pleasure in the answers this cross-questioning elicited. He had only one recollection of his mother, seeing her in long diamond earrings on some company occasion, and sleeping with her by an accident when, tired out with his chattering (my silent father!), she invented a new play—a trial of who should go to sleep first. Her voice, he said, was like aunt Lissy's, low and sweet. Aunt Lissy was a Raper, and she loved Twyford, and after her marriage tried to live there, but before the railway crossed the orchard, the distance was great from chambers for so complete a man of business as uncle Frere.

Early in November 1807 we removed to town, and before the end of the month my brother John was born, the youngest, and most talented of us all. He was a small, thin, ugly baby, and he remained a plain child, little of his age for many years, no way remarkable. In the spring of 1808 William was sent to Eton, not ten, poor child! very unfit for the buffetings of that large public school, where the little boys were utterly neglected by the masters, and made mere slaves and drudges by the elder boys, many of whom used their fags unmercifully. William was fortunate in this respect, his first master was the present Duke of Leinster, a very good-natured lad; his dame, too, Mrs Denton, was kind to all her boys in a sort of way; but poor William was far from happy, he told us in confidence at midsummer, though it would have been incorrect to allow this publicly. We were proud of having a brother at Eton then, now I look back with horror on that school of corruption, where weak characters made shipwreck of all worth.

We passed a very happy winter. My mother was

more out in society than usual, having Harriet to introduce. We had hardly any lessons except such as we chose to do for our masters, M. Beckvelt, Mr Thompson, and Mr Jones, which very often was little enough; we were a great deal in Brunswick Square with uncle and aunt Frere, we had the two babies to play with, John Frere and our own Johnnie, and we had now a large acquaintance in the Square. We had great games of "Tom Tiddler," "Thread the Needle," "Follow the Leader," "Hen and Chickens," and many more, our merry laughter ringing round the gardens, where we were so safe, so uncontrolled, and so happy, though we were not among the *elite* of our little world. An elder set kept itself quite distinct from the younger ones, and a grander set walked in stately pride apart from either. Sir John Nicholls' daughters and Mr Spencer Perceval's never turned their exclusive looks upon meaner neighbours, while Justice Park's, with Daniels, Scarletts, Bennets, and others growing up, would only smile upon the children they passed occasionally. We, all unknowing and equally uncaring, romped merrily on in our gleesome play-hours, Tyndales, Huttons, Grants, Williams, Vivians. Besides, we had a grade or two below ourselves with which on no account were we to commingle; some coarse-shoed, cotton-gloved children, and a set who entered with borrowed keys, and certainly appeared out of their proper place. Home was quite as pleasant as the Square, the baby made us so merry. I worked for him too; this employment was quite a passion with me; from very early days down to this very hour generations of little people might have thanked my busy fingers for their outfit. My box of baby clothing has never been empty since I first began to dress my doll. Many a weary hour has been beguiled by this useful plain work, for there are times when reading, writing, or more active employments only irritate, and when needlework is really soothing, particularly when there is an object in the labour. It used as a child to give me a glow of delight to see the work of my fingers on

my sisters and brothers, and on the Rothiemurchus babies; for it was only for our own poor that I busied myself, everybody giving me scraps for this purpose, and sometimes help and patterns. My sisters never worked from choice; they much preferred to the quiet occupations, the famous romps in Brunswick Square, where, aunt Lissy having no nerves, her tall brothers-in-law, who were all uncles Frere to us, made perfect bedlam in her drawing-room, and after dinner made for us rabbits of the doyleys, cut apples into swans and wells, and their pips into mice.

Uncle John, the ambassador, was rather stately; but uncle Bartle, his secretary, was our grand ally; William, the sergeant, came next in our esteem; Edward was quieter; the two younger, Hatley and Temple, were all we could wish. The two sisters we hardly knew, Lady Orde was in the country, and Miss Frere, my aunt's friend Susan, was generally ill. There was a friend, however, Sir Robert Ainslie, whom we thought charming, and a Lady Laurie and her brother, Captain Hatley, who were very likeable. We were pretty well off for friends at home; Captain Stevenson and his brother Colonel Barnes were famous play-fellows, and our cousin Harry Raper, and the old set besides. Also we helped to dress my mother and Harriet Grant of Glenmoriston, my father's ward, for their parties, and had once great fun preparing them for a masquerade, when, with the assistance of some friends, they all went as the country party in the Journey to London, my mother being such a pretty Miss Jenny. Another time Harriet went as a Highland girl, in some fantastic guise of Miss Stewart's invention, and meeting with a kilted, belted, well-plumed Highlander, had fun enough to address him in Gaelic, and he, not understanding one word of what should have been his native tongue, retreated confounded, she following, till he turned and fled, to the delight of the lookers-on who somehow always seem to enjoy the discomfiture of a fellow-creature. It was Harriet's last exploit in London. She went north to some of her

Highland aunts, in company with her brother Patrick the laird this spring.

Early in the summer of 1808, we all started together for the Highlands. The greater part of the furniture had been sent from Twyford to the Doune, where, truth to say, it was very much wanted. The servants all went north with it by sea, excepting those in immediate attendance on ourselves. A new barouche landau was started this season, which served for many a year, and was a great improvement upon either the old heavy close coach or the leather-curtained sociable. Four bays in hand conducted us to Houghton, where after a visit of a few days my father proceeded on his circuit, and my mother removed with the children to Seaham, a little bathing hamlet on the coast of Durham, hardly six miles from Houghton. She had often passed an autumn there when a child, with some of her numerous brothers and sisters, and she said it made her feel young again to find herself there once more, wandering over all the ground she knew so well. She was indeed in charming spirits during the whole of our sojourn at this pretty place. We lived entirely with her, she bathed with us, walked with us, we gladly drove in turn with her. We took our meals with her, and she taught us how to make necklaces of the seaweed and the small shells we found, and how to clean and polish the large shells for fancy works she had done in her own childhood, when she, our grave, distant mother, had run about and laughed like us. How very happy parents have it in their power to make their children! We grew fat and rosy, required no punishments, hardly indeed a reprimand; but then Mrs Millar had left us, she had gone on a visit to her friends at Stockton, taking the baby with her, for as far as care of him was concerned she was quite to be trusted.

We lived in a little public-house, the only inn in the place. We entered at once into the kitchen, bright and clean, and full of cottage valuables; a bright "sea-coal" fire burned always cheerily in the grate, and on the settle at one side generally sat the old grandfather of

the family, with his pipe, or an old worn newspaper, or a friend. The daughter, who was mistress of the house, kept bustling about in the back kitchen where all the business went on, which was quite as clean, though not so handsomely furnished, as the one where the old man sat. There was a scullery besides for dirty work, such as baking, brewing, washing, and preparing the cookery. A yard behind held a large water-butt and several outhouses; a neatly-kept flower-garden, a mere strip, lay beneath the windows in the front, opening into a large kitchen garden on one side. The sea, though not distant, could only be seen from the upper windows; for this and other reasons we generally sat upstairs. Roses and woodbine clustered round the lattices, the sun shone in, the scent of the flowers, and the hum of the bees and the chirp of the birds, all entered the open casements freely; and the polished floors and furniture, and the clean white dimity hangings, added to the cheerfulness of our suite of small attics. The parlour below was dull by comparison. It could only be reached through the front kitchen; tall shrubs overshadowed the window, it had green walls, hair-bottomed chairs set all round by them; one round table in the middle of the room oiled till it was nearly black, and rubbed till it shone like a mirror; a patch of carpet was spread beneath this table, and a paper net for catching flies hung from the ceiling over it; a corner cupboard full of tall glasses and real old china tea-cups, and a large china punch-bowl on the top, and a corner-set arm-chair with a patch-work cover on the cushion, are all the extras I remember. We were very little in this "guest-chamber," only at our meals or on rainy days. We were for ever on the beach, strolling along the sands, which were beautiful; sitting on the rocks or in the caves, penetrating as far into them as we dared. When we bathed we undressed in a cave and then walked into the sea, generally hand in hand, my mother heading us. How we used to laugh and dance, and splash, and push, anything but *dip*, we avoided that as much as possible; then in consideration

of our cold bath we had a warm tea breakfast and felt so light. It was a very happy time at Seaham. Some of the Houghton cousins were often with us, Kate and Eliza constantly. We had all straw bonnets alike, coarse dunstables lined and trimmed with green, with deep curtains on the neck, pink gingham frocks and holland pinafores, baskets in our hands, and gloves in our pockets. We did enjoy the seashore scrambles. On Sundays we were what we thought very fine, white frocks all of us; the cousins had white cambric bonnets and tippets, and long kid gloves to meet the short sleeves. We had fine straw bonnets trimmed with white, and black silk spencers. My mother wore gipsy hats, in which she looked beautiful; they were tied on with half-handkerchiefs of various colours, and had a single sprig of artificial flowers inside over one eye. We went to church either at Seaham or Houghton, the four bays carrying us quickly to my uncle Ironside's, when we spent the remainder of the day there always, our own feet bearing us to the little church on the cliffs when it suited my mother to stay at home.

The name of the old Rector of Seaham I cannot recollect; he was a nice kind old man, who most good-naturedly, when we drank tea at the parsonage, played chess with me, and once or twice let me beat him. He had a kind homely wife too, our great ally. She had many housekeeping ways of pleasing children. The family, a son and two or three daughters, were more aspiring; they had annual opportunities of seeing the ways of more fashionable people, and so tried a little finery at home, in particular drilling an awkward lout of a servant boy into a caricature of a lady's page. One evening, in the drawing-room, the old quiet mamma observing that she had left her knitting in the parlour, the sprucest of the daughters immediately rose and rang the bell and desired this attendant to fetch it, which he did upon a silver salver; the thick grey woollen stocking for the parson's winter wear, presented with a bow—such a bow! to his mistress. No comments that I heard were made upon this scene, but it haunted me

as in some way incongruous. Next day, when we were at our work in the parlour, I came out with, "Mamma, wouldn't you rather have run down yourself and brought up that knitting?" "*You* would, I hope, my dear," answered she with her smile—she had such a sweet smile when she was pleased—"you would any of you."

Except the clergyman's family there was none of gentle degree in the village, it was the most primitive hamlet ever met with, a dozen or so of cottages, no trade, no manufacture, no business doing that we could see: the owners were mostly servants of Sir Ralph Milbanke's. He had a pretty villa on the cliff surrounded by well-kept grounds, where Lady Milbanke liked very much to retire in the autumn with her little daughter, the unfortunate child granted to her after eighteen years of childless married life. She generally lived quite privately here, seeing only the Rector's family, when his daughters took their lessons in high breeding; and for a companion for the future Lady Byron at these times she selected the daughter of our landlady, a pretty, quiet, elegant-looking girl, who bore very ill with the public-house ways after living for weeks in Miss Milbanke's apartments. I have often wondered since what became of little Bessy. She liked being with us. She was in her element only with refined people, and unless Lady Milbanke took her entirely and provided for her, she had done her irremediable injury by raising her ideas beyond her home. Her mother seemed to feel this, but they were dependants, and did not like to refuse "*my lady*." Surely it could not have been that modest graceful girl, who was "*born in the garret, in the kitchen bred*"? I remember her mother and herself washing their hands in a tub in the back-yard after some work they had been engaged in, and noticing sadly, I know not why, the bustling hurry with which one pair of red, rough hands was yellow-soaped, well plunged, and then dried off on a dish-cloth; and the other pale, thin delicate pair was gently soaped and slowly rinsed, and softly wiped on a towel brought down for the

purpose. What strangely curious incidents make an impression upon some minds! Bessy could make seaweed necklaces and shell bags and work very neatly. She could understand our books too, and was very grateful for having them lent to her. My mother never objected to her being with us, but our Houghton cousins did not like playing with her, their father and mother, they thought, would not approve of it; so when they were with us our more humble companion retired out of sight, giving us a melancholy smile if we chanced to meet her. My mother had no finery. She often let us, when at Houghton, drink tea with an old Nanny Appleby, who had been their nursery-maid. She lived in a very clean house with a niece, an eight-day clock, a chest of drawers, a corner-set chair, and a quantity of bright pewter. The niece had twelve caps, all beautifully done up, though of various degrees of rank; one was on her head, the other eleven in one of the drawers of this chest, as we counted, for we were taken to inspect them. The aunt gave us girdle cakes, some plain, some spiced, and plenty of tea, Jane getting hers in a real china cup, which was afterwards given to her on account of her possessing the virtue of being named after my mother. There were grander parties, too, at Houghton, among the aunts and the uncles and the cousins. At these gayer meetings my great-aunts Peggy and Elsie appeared in the very handsome headgear my mother had brought them from London, which particularly impressed me as I watched the old ladies bowing and jingling at the tea-table night after night. They were called dress turbans, and were made alike of rolls of muslin folded round a catgut headpiece and festooned with large loops of large beads ending in bead tassels, after the most approved prints of Tippoo Sahib. They were considered extremely beautiful as well as fashionable, and were much admired. We also drove in the mornings to visit different connections, on one occasion going as far as Sunderland, where the iron bridges so delighted Jane and me, and the shipping and the busy quays, that we were reproved afterwards for a state of

over-excitement that prevented our responding properly to the attentions of our great-aunt Blackburn, a remarkably handsome woman, though then upwards of eighty.

It was almost with sorrow that we heard circuit was over ; whether sufficient business had been done on it to pay the travelling expenses, no one ever heard, or I believe inquired, for my father was not communicative upon his business matters ; he returned in his usual good spirits. Mrs Millar and Johnnie also reappeared ; aunt Mary packed up ; she took rather a doleful leave of all and started.

At Edinburgh, of course, my father's affairs detained him as usual ; this time my mother had something to do there. Aunt Mary had been so long rusticating at Houghton—four months, I think—that her wardrobe had become very old-fashioned, and as there was always a great deal of company in the Highlands during the shooting season, it was necessary for her to add considerably to it. Dressmakers consequently came to fit on dresses, and we went to silk mercers, linen-drapers, haberdashers, etc. Very amusing indeed, and no way extraordinary ; and so we proceeded to Perth, where, for the last time, we met our great-uncle Sandy. This meeting made the more impression on me, not because of his death soon after, for we did not much care for him, but for his openly expressed disappointment at my changed looks. I had given promise of resembling his handsome mother, the Lady Jean Gordon, with her fair oval face, her golden hair, and brilliant skin ; I had grown into a Raper, to his dismay, and he was so ungallant as to enter into particulars—yellow, peaky, skinny, drawn up, lengthened out, everything disparaging ; true enough, I believe, for I was not strong, and many a long year had to pass before a gleam of the Gordon beauty settled on me again. It passed whole and entire to Mary, who grew up an embodiment of all the perfection of the old family portraits. Jane was a true Ironside then and ever, William ditto, John like me, a cross between Grant and Raper.

They did not understand me, and they did not use

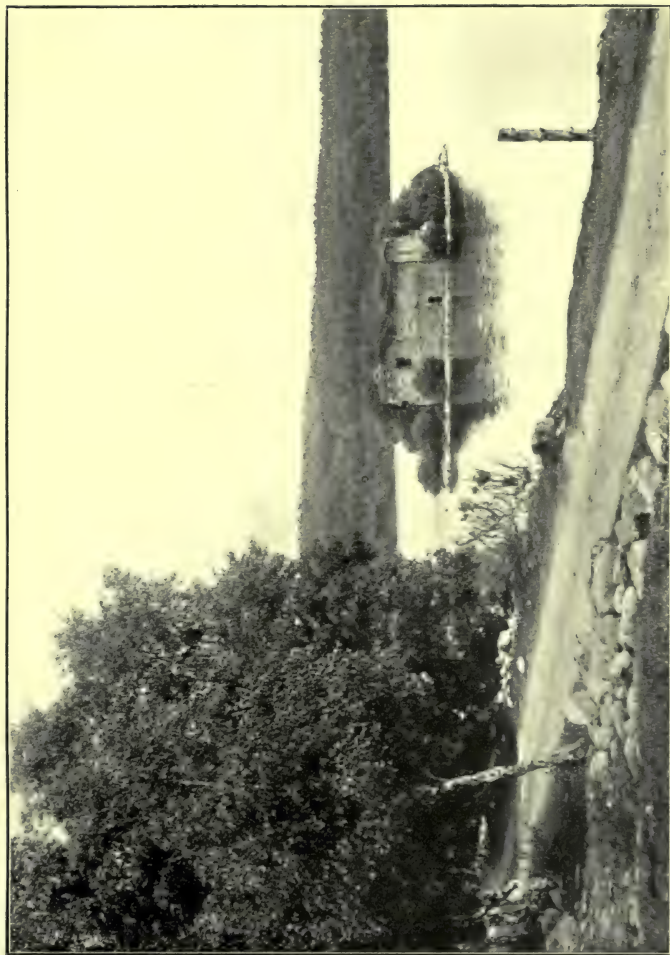
me well. The physical constitution of children nobody thought it necessary to attend to then, the disposition was equally neglected, no peculiarities were ever studied ; how many early graves were the consequence ! I know now that my constitution was eminently nervous ; this extreme susceptibility went by many names in my childhood, and all were linked with evil. I was affected, sly, sullen, insolent, everything but what I really was, nervously shy when noticed. Jealous too, they called me, jealous of dear good Jane, because her fearless nature, fine healthy temperament, as shown in her general activity, her bright eyes and rosy cheeks, made her a much more satisfactory plaything than her timid sister. Her mind, too, was precocious ; she loved poetry, understood it, learned it by heart, and expressed it with the feeling of a much older mind, acting bits from her favourite Shakespeare like another Roscius. These exhibitions and her dancing made her quite a little show, while I, called up on second thoughts to avoid distinctions, cut but a sorry figure beside her ; this inferiority I felt, and felt it still further paralyse me. Then came the unkind, cutting rebuke, which my loving heart could ill bear with. I have been taunted with affectation when my fault was ignorance, called sulky when I have been spirit-crushed. I have been sent supperless to bed for not, as Cassius, giving the cue to Brutus, whipped by my father at my mother's representation of the insolence of my silence, or the impudence of the pert reply I was goaded on to make ; jeered at as the would-be modest, flouted as envious. How little they guessed the depth of the affection thus tortured. They did it ignorantly, but how much after-grief this want of wisdom caused ; a very unfavourable effect on my temper was the immediate result, and health and temper go together.

CHAPTER V

1808-1809

ON reaching the Doune a great many changes at first perplexed us. The stables in front of the house were gone, also the old barn, the poultry-house, the duck-pond; every appurtenance of the old farmyard was removed to the new offices at the back of the hill; a pretty lawn extended round two sides of the house, and the backwater was gone, the broom island existed no longer, no thickets of beech and alder intercepted the view of the Spey. A green field dotted over with trees stretched from the broad terrace on which the house now stood to the river, and the washing-shed was gone. All that scene of fun was over, pots, tubs, baskets, and kettles were removed with the maids and their attendants to a new building, always at the back of the hill, better adapted, I daresay, to the purposes of a regular laundry, but not near so picturesque, although quite as merry, as our beloved broom island. I am sure I have backwoods tastes, like my aunt Frere, whom I never could, by letter or in conversation, interest in the Rothiemurchus improvements. She said the whole romance of the place was gone. She prophesied, and truly, that with the progress of knowledge all the old feudal affections would be overwhelmed, individuality of character would cease, manners would change, the Highlands would become like the rest of the world, all that made life most charming there would fade away, little would be left of the olden time, and life there would become as uninteresting as in other little-

remarkable places. The change had not begun yet, however. There was plenty of all in the rough as yet in and about the Doune, where we passed a very happy summer, for though just round the house were alterations, all else was the same. The old servants were there, and the old relations were there, and the lakes and the burnies, and the paths through the forest, and we enjoyed our out-of-door life more this season than usual, for cousin James Griffith arrived shortly after ourselves with his sketch-book and paint-boxes, and he passed the greater part of the day wandering through all that beautiful scenery, Jane and I his constant companions. Mary was a mere baby, but William, Jane, and I, who rode in turns on the grey pony, thought ourselves very big little people, and expected quite as matter of right to belong to all the excursion trains, were they large or small. Cousin James was fond of the Lochans with their pretty fringe of birchwood, and the peeps through it of the Croft, Tullochgrue, and the mountains. A sheep path running along by the side of the burn which fed these picturesque small lochs was a favourite walk of aunt Mary's, and my father had christened it by her name. It started from the Polchar, and followed the water to the entrance of the forest, where, above all, we loved to lose ourselves, wandering on among the immense roots of the fir trees, and then scattering to gather cranberries, while our artist companion made his sketches. He liked best to draw the scenery round Loch-an-Eilan; he also talked to us if we were near him, explaining the perspective and the colouring and the lights and shadows, in a way we never forgot, and which made these same scenes very dear to us afterwards. It was, indeed, hardly possible to choose amiss; at every step there lay a picture. All through the forest, which then measured in extent nearly twenty square miles, small rivers ran with sometimes narrow strips of meadowland beside them; many lochs of various sizes spread their tranquil waters here and there in lonely beauty. In one of them, as its name



LOCH-AN-EILAN CASTLE.

implied, was a small island quite covered by the ruins of a stronghold, a momento of the days of the Bruce, for it was built by the Red Comyns, who then owned all Strathspey and Badenoch. A low square tower at the end of the ruin supported an eagle's nest. Often the birds rose as we were watching their eyrie, and wheeled skimming over the loch in search of the food required by the young eaglets, who could be seen peeping over the pile of sticks that formed their home. Up towards the mountains the mass of fir broke into straggling groups of trees at the entrance of the glens which ran far up among the bare rocky crags of the Grampians. Here and there upon the forest streams rude sawmills were constructed, where one or at most two trees were cut up into planks at one time. The sawmiller's hut close beside, a cleared field at hand with a slender crop of oats growing on it, the peat-stack near the door, the cow, and of course a pony, grazing at will among the wooding. Nearer to the Spey the fir wood yielded to banks of lovely birch, the one small field expanded into a farm; yet over all hung the wild charm of Nature, mountain scenery in mountain solitude beautiful under any aspect of the sky.

Our summer was less crowded with company than usual, very few except connections or a passing stranger coming to mar the sociability of the family party. Some of the Cumming Gordons were with us, the Lady Logie, and Mrs Cooper, with whom my mother held secret mysterious conferences. There were Kinrara gaieties too, but *we* did not so frequently share in them, some very coarse speeches of the Duchess of Manchester having too much disgusted cousin James to make him care for such company too often repeated. He had a very short time before been elected Head of his college in Oxford. As Master of University with a certain position, a good income, a fine house, and still better expectations through his particular friends Lord Eldon the Chancellor, and his brother Sir William Scott, he was now able to realise a

long-cherished hope of securing his cousin Mary to share his prosperous fortunes. They were going together in middle age, very sensibly on both parts, first loves on either side, fervent as they were, having been long forgotten, and they were to be married and to be at home in Oxford by the gaudy day in October. The marriage was to take place in the Episcopal chapel at Inverness, and the whisperings with Mrs Cooper had reference to the necessary arrangements. It was on the 19th of September, my brother William's birthday, that the bridal party set out; a bleak day it was for encountering Slochd Mor; that wild, lonely road could have hardly looked more dreary. I accompanied the aunt I was so very much attached to, in low enough spirits, having the thought of losing her for ever, dreading many a trial she had saved me from, and Mrs Millar, who feared her searching eye. My prospects individually were not brightened by the happy event every one congratulated the family on. Cousin James was to take his wife by the coast road to Edinburgh, and then to Tennyochside. Some other visits were to be paid by the way, so my aunt had packed the newest portion of her wardrobe, much that she had been busied upon with her own neat fingers all those summer days, and all her trinkets, in a small trunk to take with her on the road; while her heavy boxes had preceded us by Thomas Mathieson, the carrier, to Inverness, and were to be sent on from thence by sea to London. We arrived at Grant's Hotel, the carriage was unpacked, and no little trunk was forthcoming! It had been very unwisely tied on behind, and had been cut off from under the rumble by some exemplary Highlander in the dreary waste named from the wild boors. My *poor* aunt's little treasures! for she was far from rich, and had strained her scanty purse for her outfit. Time was short, too, but my mother prevailed on a dressmaker—a Grant—to work. She contributed of her own stores. The heavy trunks had luckily not sailed; they were ransacked for linen, and on the 20th of September good Bishop Macfarlane

united as rationally happy a pair as ever undertook the chances of matrimony together.

We all loved aunt Mary, and soon had reason to regret her. Mrs Millar, with no eye over her, ruled again, and as winter approached and we were more in the house, nursery troubles were renewed. My father had to be frequently appealed to, severities were resumed. One day William was locked up in a small room reserved for this pleasant purpose, the next day it was I, bread and water the fare of both. A review of the volunteers seldom saw us all collected on the ground, there was sure to be one naughty child in prison and at home. We were flogged too for every error, boys and girls alike, but my father permitted no one to strike us but himself. My mother's occasional slaps and boxes on the ear were mere interjections taken no notice of. It was upon this broken rule that I prepared a scene to rid us of the horrid termagant, whom my mother with a gentle, self-satisfied sigh announced to all her friends as such a treasure. William was my accomplice, and this was our plan. My father's dressing-closet was next to our sitting nursery, and he, with Raper regularity, made use of it most methodically, dressing at certain stated hours, continuing a certain almost fixed time at his toilet, very seldom indeed deviating from this routine, which all in the same house were as well aware of as we were, Mrs Millar among the rest. The nursery was very quiet while he was our neighbour. It did sometimes happen, however, that he ran up from his study to the dressing-room at unwonted hours, and upon this chance our scheme was founded. William was to watch for this opportunity; as soon as it occurred he secretly warned me, and I immediately became naughty, did something that I knew would be particularly disagreeable to Mrs Millar. She found fault pretty sharply, I replied very pertly, in fact as saucily as I could, and no one could do it better; this was followed as I expected by two or three hard slaps on the back of my neck, upon which I set up a scream worthy of the rest of the scene, so loud, so piercing,

that in came my father to find me crouching beneath the claws of a fury. "I have long suspected this, Millar," said he, in the cold voice that sunk the heart of every culprit, for the first tone uttered told them that their doom was sealed. "Six weeks ago I warned you of what would be the consequences; you can go and pack up your clothes without delay, in an hour you leave this for Aviemore,"—and she did. No entreaties from my mother, no tears from the three petted younger children, no excuses of any sort availed. In an hour this odious woman had left us for ever. I can't remember her wicked temper now without shuddering at all I went through under her charge. In her character, though my father insisted on mentioning the cause for which she was dismissed, my mother had gifted her with such a catalogue of excellences, that the next time we heard of her she was nurse to the young Duke of Roxburghe—that wonder long looked for, come at last—and nearly murdered him one day, keeping him under water for some childish fault till he was nearly drowned, quite insensible when taken out by the footman who attended him. After this she was sent to a lunatic asylum, where the poor creature ended her stormy days; her mind had probably always been too unsettled to bear opposition, and we were too old as well as too spirited to have been left so long at the mercy of an ignorant woman, who was really a tender nurse to an infant then. In some respects we were hardly as comfortable without her, the good-natured Highland girl who replaced her not understanding the neatnesses we had been accustomed to; and then I, like other patriots, had to bear the blame of all these inconveniences; I, who for all our sakes had borne these sharp slaps in order to secure our freedom, was now complained of as the cause of very minor evils; my little brothers and sisters, even William my associate, agreeing that my passionate temper had aggravated "poor Millar," who had always been "very kind" to them. Such ingratitude! "Kill the next tiger yourselves," said I, and withdrew from their

questionable society for half a day, by which time Jane having referred to the story of the soldier and the Brahmin in our Evenings at Home, and thought the matter over, made an oration which restored outward harmony ; inwardly, I remained a little longer angry—another half-day—a long period in our estimate of time. My mother, however, discovered that the gardener's young daughter would not do for us undirected, so the coachman's wife, an English Anne, a very nice person who had been nurse before she married, was raised from the housemaid's place to be in Millar's, and it being determined we were all to stay over the winter in the Highlands, a very good plan was suggested for our profitable management. We were certainly becoming not a little wild as it was. It was arranged that a Miss Ramsay, an English girl from Newcastle, who had been employed as a school teacher at Duthil, should remove to the Doune, a happy change for her and a very fortunate hit for us. She was a kind, cheerful creature, not capable of giving us much accomplishment, but she gave us what we wanted more, habits of order.

The autumn and winter passed very happily away, under these improved arrangements. The following summer of 1809 was quite a gay one, a great deal of company flocking both to the Doune and Kinrara, and at midsummer arrived William ; the little fellow, not quite eleven years old then, had travelled all the way south after the summer holidays from Rothiemurchus to Eton, by himself, paying his way like a man ; but they did not put his courage to such a proof during the winter. He spent both his Christmas and his Easter with the Freres, and so was doubly welcome to us in July. He took care of himself as before on this long journey, starting with many companions in a post-chaise, dropping his friends here and there as they travelled, till it became more economical to coach it. At Perth all coaching ended, and I don't remember how he could have got on from thence to Dalwhinnie, where a carriage from the Doune was sent to meet him.

During the winter my father had been very much

occupied with what we considered mere toys, a little box full of soldiers, painted wooden figures, and tin flags belonging to them, all which he twisted about over the table to certain words of command, which he took the same opportunity of practising. These represented our volunteers, about which, ever since I could remember, my father, whilst in the Highlands, had been extremely occupied. There was a Rothiemurchus company, his hobby, and an Invereshie company, and I think a Strathspey company, but really I don't know enough of warlike matters—though a Colonel's *leddy*—to say whether there could be as many as three. There were officers from all districts certainly. My father was the Lieutenant-Colonel; Ballindalloch the major; the captains, lieutenants, and ensigns were all Grants and Macphersons, with the exception of our cousin Captain Cameron. Most of the elders had served in the regular army, and had retired in middle life upon their half-pay to little Highland farms in Strathspey and Badenoch, by the names of which they were familiarly known as Sluggan, Tullochgorm, Ballintomb, Kinchurdy, Bhealiott. Very soldierly they looked in the drawing-room in their uniforms, and very well the regiment looked on the ground, the little active Highlander taking naturally to the profession. There were fuglemen in those days, and I remember hearing the inspecting general say that tall Murdoch Cameron the miller was a superb model of a fugleman. I can see him now in his picturesque dress, standing out in front of the lines, a head above the tallest, directing the movements so accurately followed. My father on field days rode a beautiful bay charger named Favourite, covered with goat-skins and other finery, and seemingly quite proud of his housings. It was a kilted regiment, and a fine set of smart well-set-up men they were, with their plumed bonnets, dirks, and purses, and their low-heeled buckled shoes. My father became his trappings well, and when, in early times, my mother rode to the ground with him, dressed in a tartan petticoat, red jacket gaudily laced, and just such a bonnet and

feathers as he wore himself, with the addition of a huge cairngorm on the side of it, the old grey pony might have been proud in turn. These displays had, however, long been given up. I recollect her always quietly in the carriage with us bowing on all sides.

To prepare himself for command, my father, as I have said, spent many a long evening manœuvring all his little figures; to some purpose, for his Rothiemurchus men beat both Strathspey and Badenoch. I have heard my uncle Lewis and Mr Cameron say there was little trouble in drilling the men, they had their hearts in the work; and I have heard my father say that the habits of cleanliness, and habits of order, and the sort of waking up that accompanied it, had done more real good to the people than could have been achieved by many years of less exciting progress. So we owe Napoleon thanks. It was the terror of his expected invasion that roused this patriotic fever amongst our mountains, where, in spite of their distance from the coast, inaccessibility, and other advantages of a hilly position, the alarm was so great that every preparation was now in train for repelling the enemy. The men were to face the foe, the women to fly for refuge to Castle Grant. My mother was all ready to remove there, when the danger passed; but it was thought better to keep up the volunteers. Accordingly they were periodically drilled, exercised, and inspected till the year '13, if I remember rightly. It was a very pretty sight, either on the moor of Tullochgorm or the beautiful meadows of Dalnavert, to come suddenly on this fine body of men and the gay crowd collected to look at them. Then their manœuvres with such exquisite scenery around them, and the hearty spirit of their cheer whenever "the Leddy" appeared upon the ground; the bright sun seldom shone upon a more exhilarating spectacle. The Laird, their Colonel, reigned in all hearts. After the "Dismiss," bread and cheese and whisky, sent forward in a cart for the purpose, were profusely administered to the men, all of whom from Rothiemurchus formed a running escort

round our carriage, keeping up perfectly with the four horses in hand, which were necessary to draw the heavy landau up and down the many steepes of our hilly roads. The officers rode in a group round my father to the Doune to dinner, and I recollect that it was in this year 1809 that my mother remarked that she saw some of them for the first time in the drawing-room to tea—and sober.

Miss Ramsay occupied us so completely this summer, we were much less with the autumn influx of company than had been usual with us. Happy in the schoolroom, still happier out in the forest, with a pony among us to ride and tie, and our luncheon in a basket, we were indifferent to the more dignified parties whom we sometimes crossed in our wanderings. To say the truth, my father and mother did not understand the backwoods, they liked a very well cooked dinner, with all suitable appurtenances in their own comfortable house; neither of them could walk, she could not ride, there were no roads for carriages, a cart was out of the question, such a vehicle as would have answered the sort of expeditions they thus seldom went on was never thought of, so with them it was a very melancholy attempt at the elephant's dancing. Very different from the ways of Kinrara. There was a boat on Loch-an-Eilan, which was regularly rowed over to the old ruined castle, then to the pike bay to take up the floats that had fish to them, and then back to the echo and into the carriage again; but there was no basket with luncheon, no ponies to ride and tie, no dreaming upon the heather in pinafores all stained with blaeberreries! The little people were a great deal merrier than their elders, and so some of these elders thought, for we were often joined by the "lags of the drove," who perhaps purposely avoided the grander procession. Kinrara was full as usual. The Duke of Manchester was there with some of his children, the most beautiful statue-like person that ever was seen in flesh and blood. Poor Colonel Cadogan, afterwards killed in Spain, who taught us to *play the devil*, which I wonder did not kill us; certainly throwing that heavily-

leaded bit of wood from one string to the opposite, it might have fallen upon a head by the way, but it never did. The Cummings of Altyre were always up in our country, some of them in one house or the other, and a Mr Henville, an Oxford clergyman, Sir William's tutor, who was in love with the beautiful Emilia, as was young Charles Grant, now first seen among us, shy and plain and yet preferred; and an Irish Mr Macklin, a clever little, flighty, ugly man, who played the flute divinely, and wore out the patience of the laundry-maids by the number of shirts he put on per day; for we washed for all our guests, there was no one in all Rothiemurchus competent to earn a penny in this way. He was a "very clean gentleman," and took a bath twice a day, not in the river, but in a tub—a tub brought up from the wash-house, for in those days the chamber apparatus for ablutions was quite on the modern French scale. Grace Baillie was with us with all her pelisses, dressing in all the finery she could muster, and in every style; sometimes like a flower-girl, sometimes like Juno; now she was queen-like, then Arcadian, then *corps de ballet*, the most amusing and extraordinary figure stuck over with coloured glass ornaments, and by way of being outrageously refined; the most complete contrast to her sister the Lady Logie. Well, Miss Baillie coming upstairs to dress for dinner, opened the door to the left instead of the door to the right, and came full upon short, fat, black Mr Macklin in his tub! Such a commotion! we heard it in our schoolroom. Miss Baillie would not appear at dinner. Mr Macklin, who was full of fun, would stay upstairs if she did; she insisted on his immediate departure, he insisted on their swearing eternal friendship. Such a hubbub was never in a house before. "If she'd been a young girl, one would a'most forgive her nonsense," said Mrs Bird, the nurse. "If she had had common sense," said Miss Ramsay, "she would have held her tongue; shut the door and held her tongue, and no one would have been the wiser." We did not forget this lesson in presence of mind, but no one having ventured on giving even

an idea of it to Miss Baillie, her adventure much annoyed the ladies, while it furnished the gentlemen with an excuse for such roars of laughter as might almost have brought down the ceiling of the dining-room.

Our particular friend, Sir Robert Ainslie, was another who made a long stay with us. He brought to my mother the first of those little red morocco cases full of needles she had seen, where the papers were all arranged in sizes, on a slope, which made it easy to select from them.

This was the first season I can recollect seeing a family we all much liked, Colonel Gordon and his tribe of fine sons. He brought them up to Glentromie in a boat set on wheels, which after performing coach on the roads was used for loch-fishing in the hills. He was a most agreeable and gentlemanly man, full of amusing conversation, and always welcome to every house on the way. He was said to be a careless father, and not a kind husband to his very pretty wife, who certainly never accompanied him up to the Glen. He was a natural son of the Duke of Gordon's, a great favourite with the Duchess! much beloved by Lord Huntly whom he exceedingly resembled, and so might have done better for himself and all belonging to him, had not the Gordon brains been of the lightest with him. He was not so flighty, however, as another visitor we always received for a few days, Lovat, the Chief of the Clan Fraser, who was indeed a connection. The peerage had been forfeited by the wicked lord in the last rebellion, the lands and the chieftainship had been left with a cousin, the rightful heir, who had sprung from the common stock before the attainder. He was an old man, and his quiet, comfortable-looking wife was an old woman. They had been at Cluny, the lady of the Macpherson chieftain being their niece, or the laird their nephew, I don't exactly know which; and their servants told ours they had had a hard matter to get their master away, for he was subject to strange whims, and he had taken it into his head when he was there that he was a turkey hen, and so he made

a nest of straw in his carriage and filled it with eggs and a large stone, and there he sat hatching, never leaving his station but twice a day like other fowl, and having his supplies of food brought to him. They had at last to get Lady Cluny's henwife to watch a proper moment to throw out all the eggs and to put some young chickens in their place, when Lovat, satisfied he had accomplished his task, went about clucking and strutting with wonderful pride in the midst of them. He was quite sane in conversation generally, rather an agreeable man I heard them say, and would be as steady as other people for a certain length of time; but every now and then he took these strange fancies, when his wife had much ado to bring him out of them. The fit was over when he came to us. It was the year of the Jubilee when George III. had reigned his fifty years. There had been great doings at Inverness, which this old man described to us with considerable humour. His lady had brought away with her some little ornaments prepared for the occasion, and kindly distributed some of them among us. I long kept a silver buckle with his Majesty's crowned head somewhere upon it, and an inscription commemorating the event in pretty raised letters surrounding the medallion. By the bye it was on the entrance of the old king upon his fiftieth year of reign that the Jubilee was kept, in October I fancy 1809, for his state of health was such he was hardly expected to live to complete it; that is, the world at large supposed him to be declining. Those near his person must have known that it was the mind that was diseased, not the strong body, which lasted many a long year after this, though every now and then his death was expected, probably desired, for he had ceased to be a popular sovereign. John Bull respected the decorum of his domestic life, and the ministerial Tory party of course made the best of him. All we of this day can say of him is, that he was a better man than his son, though, at the period I am writing of, the Whigs, among whom I was reared, were very far indeed from believing in this truism.

It was this autumn that a very great pleasure was given to me. I was taken on a tour of visits with my father and mother. We went first to Inverness, where my father had business with his agent, Mr Cooper. None of the lairds in our north countrie managed their own affairs, all were in the hands of some little writer body, who to judge by consequences ruined most of their clients. One of these leeches generally sufficed for ordinary victims. My dear father was preyed on by two or three, of which fraternity Mr Arthur Cooper was one. He had married Miss Jenny and made her a very indulgent husband; her few hundreds and the connection might have been her principal attractions, but once attracted, she retained her power over him to the end. She was plain but ladylike, she had very pretty, gentle manners, a pleasing figure, beautiful hand, dressed neatly, kept a very comfortable house, and possessed a clear judgment, with high principles and a few follies; a little absurd pride, given her perhaps by my great-aunt, the Lady Logie, who had brought her up and was very fond of her. We were all very fond of Mrs Cooper, and she adored my father. While we were at Inverness we paid some morning visits too characteristic of the Highlands to be omitted in this true chronicle of the times; they were all in the Clan. One was to the Misses Grant of Kinchurdy, who were much patronised by all of their name, although they had rather scandalised some of their relations by setting up as dressmakers in the county town. Their taste was not perfect, and their skill was not great, yet they prospered. Many a comfort earned by their busy needles found its way to the fireside of the retired officer their father, and their helping pounds bought the active officer, their brother, his majority. We next called on Mrs Grant, late of Aviemore, and her daughters, who had set up a school, no disparagement to the family of an innkeeper although the blood they owned was gentle, and last we took luncheon with my great-aunt, the Lady Glenmoriston, a handsome old lady with great remains of shrewdness in her counten-

ance. I thought her cakes and custards excellent; my mother, who had seen them all come out of a cupboard in the bedroom, found her appetite fail her that morning. Not long before we had heard of her grandson our cousin Patrick's death, the eldest of my father's wards, the Laird; she did not appear to feel the loss, yet she did not long survive him. A clever wife, as they say in the Highlands, she was in her worldly way. I did not take a fancy to her.

We left Inverness nothing loth, Mrs Cooper's small house in the narrow, dull street of that little town not suiting my ideas of liberty; and we proceeded in the open barouche and four to call at Nairn upon our way to Forres. At Nairn, comfortless dreary Nairn, where no tree ever grew, we went to see a sister of Logie's, a cousin, a Mrs Baillie, some of whose sons had found 31 Lincoln's Inn Fields a pleasant resting-place on the road to India. Her stepson—for she was a second wife—the great Colonel Baillie of Bundelcund and of Leys, often in his pomposity, when I knew him afterwards, recalled to my mind the very bare plenishing of this really nice old lady. The small, cold house chilled our first feelings. The empty room, uncurtained, half carpeted, with a few heavy chairs stuck formally against the walls, and one dark-coloured, well-polished table set before the fireplace, repressed all my gay spirits. It took a great deal of bread and marmalade, scones and currant wine, and all the kind welcome of the little, brisk old lady to restore them; not till she brought out her knitting did I feel at home—a hint remembered with profit. Leaving this odious fisher place very near as quick as King James did, we travelled on to dine at five o'clock at Burgie, a small, shapeless square of a house, about two miles beyond Forres, one of the prettiest of village towns, taking situation into the account. There is a low hill with a ruin on it, round which the few streets have clustered; trees and fields are near, wooded knolls not far distant, gentlemen's dwellings peep up here and there; the Moray Firth, the town and Sutors of Cromartie, and the Ross-shire hills in the

distance; between the village and the sea extends a rich flat of meadowland, through which the Findhorn flows, and where stand the ruins of the ancient Abbey of Kinloss, my father's late purchase. I don't know why all this scene impressed me more than did the beautiful situation of Inverness. In after-years I did not fail in admiration of our northern capital, but at this period I cannot remember any feeling about Inverness except the pleasure of getting out of it, while at Forres all the impressions were vivid because agreeable; that is I, the perceiver, was in a fitting frame of mind for perceiving. How many travellers, ay, thinkers, judges, should we sift in this way, to get at the truth of their relations. On a bilious day authors must write tragically.

The old family of Dunbar of Burgie, said to be descended from Randolph, Earl of Moray—though all the links of the chain of connection were far from being forthcoming—had dwindled down rather before our day to somebody nearly as small as a bonnet Laird; his far-away collateral heir, who must have been a most ungainly lad, judging from his extraordinary appearance in middle age, had gone out to the West Indies to better his fortunes, returning to take possession of his inheritance a little before my father's marriage. In figure something the shape of one of his own sugar hogsheads, with two short thick feet standing out below, and a round head settled on the top like a picture in the Penny Magazine of one of the old English punishments, and a countenance utterly indescribable—all cheek and chin and mouth, without half the proper quantity of teeth; dressed too like a mountebank in a light blue silk embroidered waistcoat and buff satin breeches, and this in Pitt and Fox days, when the dark blue coat, and the red or the buff waistcoat, according to the wearer's party, were indispensable. So dressed, Mr Dunbar presented himself to my father, to be introduced by him to an Edinburgh assembly. My father, always fine, then a beau, and to the last very nervous under ridicule! But Burgie was a worthy

man, honest and upright and kind-hearted, modest as well, for he never fancied his own merits had won him his wealthy bride; their estates joined, "and that," as he said himself, "was the happy coincidence." The Lady Burgie and her elder sister, Miss Brodie of Lethen, were co-heiresses. Coulmonie, a very picturesque little property on the Findhorn, was the principal possession of the younger when she gave her hand to her neighbour, but as Miss Brodie never married, all their wide lands were united for many a year to the names and titles of the three contracting parties, and held by Mr and Mrs Dunbar Brodie of Burgie, Lethen, and Coulmonie during their long reign of dulness; precedence being given to the gentleman after some consideration. They lived neither at very pretty Coulmonie, nor at very comfortable Lethen, nor even in the remains of the fine old Castle of Burgie, one tall tower of which rose from among the trees that sheltered its surrounding garden, and served only as storehouse and toolhouse for that department; they built for themselves the tea-canister-like lodge we found them in, and placed it far from tree or shrub, or any object but the bare moor of Macbeth's witches. My spare time at this romantic residence was spent mostly in the tower, there being up at the top of it an apple-room, where some little maiden belonging to the household was occupied in wiping the apples and laying them on the floor in a bed of sand. In this room was a large chest, made of oak with massive hasps, several padlocks, and a chain; very heavy, very grand-looking, indeed awful, from its being so alone, so secured, and so mysteriously hidden as it were. It played its part in after-years, when all that it did and all that was done to it shall take the proper place in these my memoirs, if I live to get so far on in my chroniclings. At this time I was afraid even to allude to it, there appeared to be something so supernatural about the look of it.

Of course we had several visits to pay from Burgie. In the town of Forres we had to see old Mrs Provost Grant and her daughters, Miss Jean and Miss—I

forget what—but she, the nameless one, died. Miss Jean, always called in those parts Miss Jean Pro, because her mother was the widow of the late Provost, was the living frontispiece to the “world of fashion.” A plain, ungainly, middle-aged woman, with good Scotch sense when it was wanted, occupied every waking hour in copying the new modes in dress; no change was too absurd for Miss Jean’s imitation, and her task was not a light one, her poor purse being scanty, and the Forres shops, besides being dear, were ill supplied. My mother, very unwisely, had told me her appearance would surprise me, and that I must be upon my guard and show my good breeding by looking as little at this figure of fun as if she were like other people; and my father repeated the story of the Duchess of Gordon, who received at dinner at Kinrara some poor dominie, never before in such a presence; he answered all her civil inquiries thus, “’Deed no, my Lady Duchess; my Lady Duchess, ’deed yes,” she looking all the while exactly as if she had never been otherwise addressed—not even a side smile to the amused circle around her, lest she might have wounded the good man’s feelings. I always liked that story, and thought of it often before and since, and had it well on my mind on this occasion; but it did not prevent my long gaze of surprise at Miss Pro. In fact, no one could have avoided opening wide eyes at the caricature of the modes she exhibited; she was *fine*, too, very fine, mincing her words to make them English, and too good to be laughed at, which somehow made it the more difficult not to laugh at her. In the early days, when her father, besides his little shop, only kept the post-office in Forres, she, the eldest of a whole troop of bairns, did her part well in the humble household, helping her mother in her many cares, and to good purpose; for of the five clever sons who out of this rude culture grew up to honour in every profession they made choice of, three returned “belted knights” to lay their laurels at the feet of their old mother; not in the same poor but and ben in which she reared them; they

took care to shelter her age in a comfortable house, with a drawing-room upstairs, where we found the family party assembled, a rather ladylike widow of the eldest son (a Bengal civilian) forming one of it. Mrs Pro was well born of the Arndilly Grants, and very proud she was of her lineage, though she had made none the worse wife to the honest man she married for his failure in this particular. In manners she could not have been his superior, the story going that in her working days she called out loud, about the first thing in the morning, to the servant lass to "put on the parritch for the pigs and the bairns," the pigs as most useful coming first.

From Burgie we went back a few miles to Moy, an old-fashioned house, very warm and very comfortable, and very plentiful, quite a contrast, where lived a distant connection, an old Colonel Grant, a cousin of Glenmoriston's, with a very queer wife, whom he had brought home from the Cape of Good Hope. This old man, unfortunately for me, always breakfasted upon porridge; my mother, who had particular reasons for wishing to make herself agreeable to him, informed him I always did the same, so during the three days of this otherwise pleasant visit a little plate of porridge for me was placed next to the big plate of porridge for him, and I had to help myself to it in silent sadness, for I much disliked this kind of food as it never agreed with me, and though at Moy they gave me cream with it, I found it made me just as sick and heavy afterwards as when I had the skimmed milk at home. They were kind old people these in their homely way.

From Moy we went straight to Elgin, where I remember only the immense library belonging to the shop of Mr Grant the bookseller, and the ruins of the fine old Cathedral. We got to Duffus to dinner, and remained there a few days with Sir Archibald and Lady Dunbar and their tribe of children. Lady Dunbar was one of the Cummings of Altyre—one of a dozen—and she had about a dozen herself, all

the girls handsome. The house was very full. We went upon expeditions every morning, danced all the evenings, the children forming quite a part of the general company, and as some of the Altyre sisters were there, I felt perfectly at home. Ellen and Margaret Dunbar wore sashes with their white frocks, and had each a pair of silk stockings which they drew on for full dress, a style that much surprised me, as I, at home or abroad, had only my pink gingham frocks for the morning, white calico for the afternoon, cotton stockings at all times, and not a ribbon, a curl, or an ornament about me.

One day we drove to Gordonstown, an extraordinary palace of a house lately descended to Sir William, along with a large property, where he had to add the Southron Gordon to the Wolf of Badenoch's long-famed name, not that it is quite clear that the failing clan owes allegiance to this branch particularly, but there being no other claimant Altyre passes for the Comyn Chief. His name is on the roll of the victors at Bannockburn as a chieftain undoubtedly. I wonder what can have been done with Gordonstown. It was like the side of a square in a town for extent of façade, and had remains of rich furnishings in it, piled up in the large deserted rooms, a delightful bit of romance to the young Dunbars and me. Another day we went greyhound coursing along the fine bold cliffs near Peterhead, and in a house on some bleak point or other we called on a gentleman and his sister, who showed us coins, vases, and spear-heads found on excavating for some purpose in their close neighbourhood at Burghead, all Roman; on going lower the workmen came upon a bath, a spring enclosed by cut-stone walls, a mosaic pavement surrounding the bath, steps descending to it, and paintings on the walls. The place was known to have been a Roman station with many others along the south side of the Moray Firth. We had all of us great pleasure in going to see these curious remains of past ages thus suddenly brought to light. I remember it all perfectly

as if I had visited it quite lately, and I recollect regretting that the walls were in many parts defaced.

On leaving Duffus we drove on to Garmouth to see Mr Steenson, my father's wood agent there; he had charge of all the timber floated down the Spey from the forest of Rothiemurchus where it had grown for ages, to the shore near Fochabers where it was sorted and stacked for sale. There was a good-natured wife who made me a present of a milk-jug in the form of a cow, which did duty at our nursery feasts for a wonderful while, considering it was made of crockery ware; and rather a pretty daughter, just come from the finishing school at Elgin, and stiff and shy of course. These ladies interested me much less than did the timber-yard, where all my old friends the logs, the spars, and the deals and my mother's oars were piled in such quantities as appeared to me endless. The great width of the Spey, the bridge at Fochabers, and the peep of the towers of Gordon Castle from amongst the cluster of trees that concealed the rest of the building, all return to me now as a picture of beauty. The Duke lived very disreputably in this solitude, for he was very little noticed, and, I believe, preferred seclusion.

It was late when we reached Leitchison, a large wandering house in a flat bare part of the country, which the Duke had given, with a good farm attached, to his natural son Colonel Gordon, our Glentromie friend. Bright fires were blazing in all the large rooms, to which long passages led, and all the merry children were jumping about the hall anxiously waiting for us. There were five or six fine boys, and one daughter, Jane, named after the Duchess. Mrs Gordon and her two sisters, the dark beautiful Agnes, and fat, red-haired Charlotte, were respectably connected in Elgin, had money, were well educated and so popular women. Mrs Gordon was pretty and pleasing, and the Colonel in company delightful; but somehow they did not get on harmoniously together; he was eccentric and extravagant, she peevish, and so they lived very

much asunder. I did not at all approve of the ways of the house after Duffus, where big and little people all associated in the family arrangements. Here at Leitchison the children were quite by themselves, with porridge breakfasts and broth dinners, and very cross Charlotte Ross to keep us in order. If she tried her authority on the Colonel as well, it was no wonder if he preferred the Highlands without her to the Lowlands with her, for I know I was not sorry when the four bays turned their heads westward, and, after a pleasant day's drive, on our return through Fochabers, Elgin, and Forres, again stopped at the door at Logie.

Beautiful Logie! a few miles up the Findhorn, on the wooded banks of that dashing river, wooded with beech and elm and oak centuries old; a grassy holm on which the hideous house stood, sloping hills behind, the water beneath, the Darnaway woods beyond, and such a garden! such an orchard! well did we know the Logie pears, large hampers of them had often found their way to the Doune; but the Logie guignes could only be tasted at the foot of the trees, and did not my young cousins and I help ourselves! Logie himself, my father's first cousin, was a tall, fine-looking man, with a very ugly Scotch face, sandy hair and huge mouth, ungainly in manner yet kindly, very simple in character, in fact a sort of goose; much liked for his hospitable ways, respected for his old Cumming blood (he was closely related to Altyre), and admired for one accomplishment, his playing on the violin. He had married rather late in life one of the cleverest women of the age, an Ayrshire Miss Baillie, a beauty in her youth, for she was Burns' "Bonnie Leslie," and a bit of a fortune, and she gave herself to the militia captain before she had ever seen the Findhorn! and they were very happy. He looked up to her without being afraid of her, for she gave herself no superior wisdom airs, indeed she set out so heartily on St Paul's advice to be subject to her husband, that she actually got into a habit of thinking he had judgment; and my mother remembered a whole room full of people hardly able to

keep their countenances, when she, giving her opinion on some disputed matter, clenched the argument as she supposed, by adding, "It's not my conviction only, but Mr Cumming says so." She was too Southron to call the Laird "Logie." Logie banks and Logie braes! how very lovely ye were on those bright autumn days, when wandering through the beech woods upon the rocky banks of the Findhorn, we passed hours, my young cousins and I, out in the pure air, unchecked of any one. Five sons and one fair daughter the Lady Logie bore her Laird; they were not all born at the time I write of. Poor Alexander and Robert, the two eldest, fine handsome boys, were my companions in these happy days; long since mourned for in their early graves. There was a strange mixture of the father's simplicity and the mother's shrewdness in all the children, and the same in their looks; only two were regularly handsome, May Anne and Alexander, who was his mother's darling. Clever as she was she made far too much distinction between him and the rest; he was better dressed, better fed, more considered in every way than the younger ones, and yet not spoiled. He never assumed and they never envied, it was natural that the young Laird should be most considered. A tutor, very little older than themselves, and hardly as well dressed, though plaiding was the wear of all, taught the boys their humanities; he ate his porridge at the side-table with them, declining the after-cup of tea, which Alexander alone went to the state-table to receive. At dinner it was the same system still, broth and boiled mutton, or the kain fowl at the poor tutor's side-table. Yet he revered the Lady; everybody did; every one obeyed her without a word, or even, I believe, a thought, that it was possible her orders could be incorrect. Her manner was very kind, very simple, though she had an affected way of speaking; but it was her strong sense, her truthful honesty, her courage—moral courage, for the body's was weak enough—her wit, her fire, her readiness that made her the queen of the intellect of

the north countrie. Every one referred to her in their difficulties; it was well that no winds wandered over the reeds that grew by the side of the Lady Logie. Yet she was worldly in a degree, no one ever more truly counselled for the times, or lived more truly up to the times, but so as it was no reproach to her. She was with us often at the Doune with or without the Laird, Alexander sometimes her companion, and he would be left with us while she was over at Kinrara, where she was a great favourite. I believe it was intended by the family to marry Alexander to Mary, they were very like and of suitable ages, and he was next heir of entail presumptive to Rothiemurchus after my brothers. It had also been settled to marry first Sir William Cumming and afterwards Charles, to me. Jane oddly enough was let alone, though we always understood her to be the favourite with everybody.

My father had a story of Mrs Cumming that often has come into my head since. He put her in mind of it now, when she declined going on in the carriage with him and my mother to dine at Relugas, where we were to remain for a few days. She had no great faith in four-in-hands on Highland roads, at our English coachman's rate of driving. She determined on walking that lovely mile by the river-side, with Alexander and the "girly"—me—as her escort; her dress during the whole of our visit, morning, noon, and night, was a scarlet cloth gown made in habit fashion, only without a train, braided in black upon the breast and cuffs, and on her head a black velvet cap, smartly set on one side, bound with scarlet cord, and having a long scarlet tassel, which dangled merrily enough now, as my father reminded her of what he called the "Passage of the Spey." It seemed that upon one occasion when she was on a visit to us, they were all going together to dine at Kinrara, and as was usual with them then, before the ford at our offices was settled enough to use when the water was high, or the road made passable for a heavy carriage up the bank of the boyack, they were to cross the Spey at the ford below Kinapol close

to Kinrara. The river had risen very much after heavy rain in the hills, and the ford, never shallow, was now so deep that the water was up above the small front wheels and in under the doors, flooding the footboard. My mother sat still and screamed. Mrs Cumming doubled herself up orientally upon the seat, and in a commanding voice, though pale with terror, desired the coachman, who could not hear her, to turn. On plunged the horses, in rushed more water, both ladies shrieked. My father attempted the masculine consolation of appealing to their sense of eyesight, which would show them "returning were as tedious as going o'er," that the next step must be into the shallows. The Lady Logie turned her head indignantly, her body she could not move, and from her divan-like seat she thus in tragic tones replied—"A reasonable man like you, Rothiemurchus, to attempt to appeal to the judgment of a woman while under the dominion of the passion of fear!"

At Relugas lived an old Mrs Cumming, with one *m*, the widow of I don't know whom, her only child her heiress daughter, and the daughter's husband, Tom Lauder. He had some income from his father, was to have more when his father died, and a large inheritance with a baronetcy at an uncle's death, Lord Fountainhall. It had been a common small Scotch house, but an Italian front had been thrown before the old building, an Italian tower had been raised above the offices, and with neatly kept grounds it was about the prettiest place ever lived in. The situation was beautiful, on a high tongue of land between the Divie and the Findhorn—the wild, leaping, rocky-bedded Divie and the broader and rapid Findhorn. All along the banks of both were well-directed paths among the wooding, a group of children flitting about the heathery braes, and the heartiest, merriest welcome within. Mr and Mrs Lauder were little more than children themselves, in manner at least; really young in years and gifted with almost bewildering animal spirits, they did keep up a racket at Relugas! It was one eternal carnival:

up late, a plentiful Scotch breakfast, out all day, a dinner of many courses, mumming all the evening, and a supper at the end to please the old lady. A Colonel Somebody had a story—ages after this, however—that having received an appointment to India, he went to take leave of his kind friends at Relugas. It was in the evening, and instead of finding a quiet party at tea, he got into a crowd of popes, cardinals, jugglers, gipsies, minstrels, flower-girls, etc., the usual amusements of the family. He spent half a lifetime in the East, and returning to his native place thought he would not pass that same hospitable door. He felt as in a dream, or as if his years of military service had been a dream—there was all the crowd of mountebanks again! The only difference was in the actors; children had grown up to take the places of the elders, some children, for all the elders were not gone. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder wore as full a turban, made as much noise, and was just as thin as the Tom Lauder of twenty years before, and his good lady, equally travestied and a little stouter, did not look a day older with her grown-up daughters round her, than she did in her own girlish times. It was certainly a pleasant house for young people. Sir Thomas, with all his frivolity, was a very accomplished man; his taste was excellent, as all his improvements showed; no walks could have been better conducted, no trees better placed, no views better chosen, and this refinement was carried all through, to the colours of the furniture and the arrangement of it. He drew well, sketched very accurately from nature, was clever at puzzles, *bouts-rimés*, etc.—the very man for a country neighbourhood. Her merit was in implicitly following his lead; she thought, felt, saw, heard as he did, and if his perceptions altered or varied, so did hers. There never was such a patient Grizzel; and the curious part of their history was that being early destined by their parents to go together, they detested one another, as children did nothing but quarrel, agreed no better as they grew, being at one on one only point, that they never would marry. How to

avoid such a catastrophe was the single subject they discussed amicably. They grew confidential upon it quite, and it ended in their settlement at Relugas.

This merry visit ended our tour. We drove home in a few hours over the long, dreary moor between the Spey and the Findhorn, passing one of the old strongholds of the Grants, the remains of a square tower beside a lonely lake—a very lonely lake, for not a tree nor a shrub was near it; and resting the horses at the Bridge of Carr, a single arch over the Dulnain, near which had clustered a few cottages, a little inn amongst them sheltered by trees; altogether a bit of beauty in the desert. I had been so good all this tour, well amused, made of, and not worried, that Miss Ramsay was extremely complimented on the improvement she had effected in my naturally bad disposition. As if there were any naturally bad dispositions! Don't we crook them, and stunt them, and force them, and break them, and do everything in the world except let them alone to expand in pure air to the sun, and nourish them healthfully?

We were now to prepare for a journey to London. I recollect rather a tearful parting from a companion to whom we had become much attached, Mr Peter of Duthil's youngest son—or only son, for all I know, as I never saw any other. Willie Grant was a fine handsome boy, a favourite with everybody and the darling of his poor father, who had but this bright spot to cheer his dull home horizon. All this summer Willie had come to the Doune with the parson every third Sunday; that is, they came on the Saturday, and generally remained over Monday. He was older than any of us, but not too old to share all our out-of-door fun, and he was full of all good, really and truly sterling. We were to love one another for ever, yet we never met again. When we returned to the Highlands he was in the East India Military College, and then he sailed, and though he lived to come home, marry, and settle in the Highlands, neither Jane nor I ever saw him more. How many of these fine lads did my father and Charles Grant

send out to India! Some that throve, some that only passed, some that made a name we were all proud of, and not one that I heard of that disgraced the homely rearing of their humbly-positioned but gentle-born parents. The moral training of those simple times bore its fair fruits: the history of many great men in the last age began in a cabin. Sir Charles Forbes was the son of a small farmer in Aberdeenshire. Sir William Grant, the Master of the Rolls, was a mere peasant—his uncles floated my father's timber down the Spey as long as they had strength to follow the calling. General William Grant was a footboy in my uncle Rothie's family. Sir Colquhoun Grant, though a woodsetter's child, was but poorly reared, in the same fashion as Mrs Pro's fortunate boys. Sir William Macgregor, whose history was most romantic of all, was such another. The list could be easily lengthened did my memory serve, but these were among the most striking examples of what the good plain schooling of the dominie, the principles and the pride of the parents, produced in young ardent spirits; forming characters which, however they were acted on by the world, never forgot home feelings, although they proved this differently. The Master of the Rolls, for instance, left all his relations in obscurity. A small annuity rendered his parents merely independent of hard labour; very moderate portions just secured for his sisters decent matches in their own degree; an occasional remittance in a bad season helped an uncle or a brother out of a difficulty. I never heard of his going to see them, or bringing any of them out of their own sphere to visit him. While the General shoved on his brothers, educated his nephews and nieces, pushed the boys up, married the girls well—such as had a wish to raise themselves—and almost resented the folly of Peter the Pensioner, who would not part with one of his flock from the very humble home where he chose to keep them. Which plan was wisest, or was either quite right? Which relations were happiest—those whose feelings were sometimes hurt, or those whose frames

were sometimes over-wearied and but scantily refreshed? I often pondered in my own young mind over these and similar questions; but just at the time of our last journey from the Doune to London less puzzling matters principally occupied my sister Jane and me.

We were not sure whether or no Miss Ramsay were to remain with us; neither were we sure whether or no we wished it. We should have more of our own way without her, that was certain; but whether that would be so good for us, whether we should get on as well in all points by ourselves, we were beginning to be suspicious of. She had taught us the value of constant employment, regular habits, obliging manners, and we knew, though we did not allow it, that there would be less peace as well as less industry should we be again left to govern ourselves. However, so it was settled. Miss Ramsay was dropped at Newcastle amongst her own friends, and for the time the relief from restraint seemed most agreeable.

CHAPTER VI

1809-1810

HAVING got so far in these memorials of past life, the pleasure of the many half-forgotten incidents now revived induces me to proceed in stringing together such recollections of our generation as can hardly fail, dear children, to be interesting to you. The feebleness of my health at present confines me so much to my room that I am neglecting nothing else while thus employing myself, so, though I have lost one listener to the chapters as they are concluded, dear Janie Gardiner being no longer among us, on I go as at Avranches, feeling that if any of you are like me, this history will be a curious family legend to refer to.

We left the Highlands, then, late in the autumn of 1809, and reached London in about three weeks from the time we set out. During the winter, and the spring of 1810, we were occupied as usual with our several masters, under whom we could not fail to make a certain degree of progress, because we were quick children and they were clever instructors, but we by no means duly improved our time, or conscientiously worked out the value of my father's money and kindness. For want of a steady director we got into habits of dawdling, idling, omitting, and so on, and we were very irregular in our hours, setting the authority of our maid, Margaret Davidson, at defiance.

We were extremely fond of a visit to Brunswick Square; the baby cousins there of whom there were now three, John, Lizzy, and George, were charming play-

things, and all our aunt's tall brothers-in-law were so fond of us, so very kind to us. Another particular friend was Mrs Sophy Williams, my father's old governess, who very often came to see us and never empty-handed, and we used to go to visit her where she then lived at Kensington as companion to old Mrs Anguish, the mother or the aunt of the Duchess of Leeds, and a relation of Mrs Raper's. It was one of those old-fashioned households now hardly remembered, where the fires were all put out, the carpets all taken up, and curtains down upon the 1st of May, not to be replaced in those shivery rooms until the 1st of October; where the hard high-backed chairs were ranged against the wall, and a round, club-legged, darkly-polished table stood quite bare in the middle of the room. In one window was a parrot on a perch, screaming for ever, "How d'ye do?" In the other the two old ladies with their worsted work, their large baskets, and their fat spaniel. Mrs Anguish talked a great deal of scandal to my mother about the court of the good Queen Charlotte, the Prince and the Duchess of Devonshire, the Duke of Devonshire and Lady Elizabeth Foster, sundry irregularities among the nobles of past and present days; while dear Mrs Williams described Twyford and Thorley, told of my grandmother's warm heart and warmer temper, of my father's quaint sayings, and aunt Lissy's goodness. We used also to visit Mrs Thrale (Dr Johnson's), who was then Mrs Piozzi—her house a sort of museum—and Lady Keith, her daughter, and in a beautiful villa looking on Rotten Row, Mrs Murray Aust, whose tour in the Highlands had made her rather celebrated; and dear old Mrs Raper in her melancholy back drawing-room in Wimpole Street, where I never yet found her doing anything whatever, though her mind must have been well filled at some former time, for she drew upon its stores in conversation most agreeably; and Mrs Charles Ironside, and old Mrs Maling I remember. What other acquaintances my mother called on I do not know, for we were always left in the carriage except at the foregoing houses. She

generally drove out every day, and some of us were always with her. On the week-days she made her visits and went shopping—to Green the glover's in little Newport Street, next door to such beautiful dolls, a whole shop of no other toy, some the size of life, opening and shutting their eyes, as was then a rare virtue; to Roberts and Plowman; to Gray the jeweller; to Rundall and Bridge, so dirty and shabby without, such a fairy palace within, where on asking a man who was filling a scoop with small brown-looking stones what he was doing, he told me he was shovelling in rubies; to Miss Stewart, our delight, cakes and flattery and bundles of finery awaiting us there; and then the three or four rooms full of *hoops* before the court days, machines of whalebone, very large, covered with silk, and then with lace or net, and hung about with festoons of lace and beads, garlands of flowers, puffings of ribbon, furbelows of all sorts. As the waists were short, how the imprisoned victims managed their arms we of this age can hardly imagine. The heads for these bodies were used as supports for whole faggots of feathers, as many as twelve sometimes standing bold upright forming really a forest of plumage; the long train stretched out behind, very narrow, more like a prolonged sash end than a garment. Yet there were beauties who wore this dress, and in it looked beautiful. We went to Churton's for our stockings, to Ross for my mother's wigs—this was another queer fashion—every woman, not alone the grey and the bald, wore an expensive wig instead of her own hair; to Lowe for shoes, to St Paul's Church corner for books. I don't remember half the places.

On Sundays we went to Lincoln's Inn Chapel in the morning, Sir William Grant looking kindly down upon us from his window. We dined, said our Catechism, and then all set out for Rotten Row, where the amusement consisted in one long file of carriages at a foot's pace going one way, passing another long file of carriages at a foot's pace going the other, bows gravely exchanged between the occupants, when any of the busy

starers were acquainted. All London was engaged in this serious business. We sometimes prevailed on my mother to make a diversion round the ring, that we might see the swans on the water, but she only now and then obliged us, much preferring that long procession up and down a mile of dusty road—the greater the crowd, the slower the move, the greater the pleasure. “Delightful drive in the park to-day” meant that there was hardly a possibility of cutting into the line, or moving much above a yard in a minute. “Most dreadfully stupid in the park to-day” meant that there was plenty of room for driving comfortably.

On Sunday evenings my father took his tea upstairs. Other evenings we carried him down a large breakfast cup full of very strong tea to his study, where he was always seated immersed in papers with his secretary, little horrid Sandy Grant, whose strange voice sounded as if he spoke through a paper-covered comb. It was not law business that occupied them; the poor clerk in the outer room had an idle time. Law-suits of his own, dreams of political influence, money loans, and all the perplexities and future miseries consequent on these busy evenings were being prepared in that study where we carried the cup of tea. How kindly my father smiled on his young messengers, how bright his room looked, how warm his fire! We liked to go there, and we loved to linger.

We were very seldom allowed to go to children's parties, nor did my mother ever give any for us at home. We went very often to the play, we three elder ones, and to Sadler's Wells and Astley's, and to some of the Concerts. Also this spring for the first time in my life I went to the Opera. We were all in the Square one afternoon, at a grand game of Tom Tiddler's ground, when one of my playmates told us that the little white flag, our homeward signal, was flying from our high windows. We ran off at once and were met at the gate by the footman, who said that I only was wanted. I was to dress as quick as possible in my best white frock to go to the Opera. How old was I that happy

night?—thirteen within a week or two. My dress was a plain white frock with plenty of tucks, a little embroidery on the waist, white calico long gloves, and a cropped head, the hair brushed bright with rose oil, which to me made the toilet complete. The Opera was "*Il Fanatico*." Naldi the father, with his full low notes, Mrs Billington his pupil daughter. She sang her *solfeggi*, all the exercises, and "*Uno trillo sopra là*"—nothing ever was so beautiful, even the memory of those sounds, so clear, so sweet, so harmonious, that voice that ran about like silver water over pearls! There is no enjoyment like good music, simple or complicated, so as it be truthfully and earnestly given; it has ever afforded to me the most intense pleasure I am capable of receiving, and how little I have heard, and how vilely I made it!

We had a great fright this year by the very severe series of illnesses that attacked poor William. He brought the whooping-cough with him from Eton at Christmas, which we all caught from him, and a pleasant time we had, condemned to one side walk in the Square, from any approach to which all other children were strictly forbidden. It was not very bad with us, and towards the end we became rather attached to our visitor, for we had no lessons, no milk, delicious tea breakfasts, and dinners of puddings and such good things, with long daily drives far out into the country. William had not long been returned to school when he took the measles; this turned to scarlet fever, and my mother went down to nurse him, with very faint hopes at one time of bringing him through. When he could be moved he was taken to Kensington to be under the care of Mrs Mary Williams, the elder sister of Sophy, who, with a blind sister, Anne, lived in a very neat house not far from the gardens. My mother went every day to see him, taking care to take off the dress she wore before allowing any of the rest of us to come near her, while any risk of infection was supposed to remain; and yet both Jane and I got, not the measles, but the scarlet fever; the younger ones escaped.

It was about this time that I began to take more notice of any remarkable persons occasionally dining at my father's. The three eccentric brothers, Lord Buchan, Lord Erskine, and Harry Erskine (by far the most brilliant of the three) stand out foremost. It was a real treat to the whole family when this last with his agreeable wife came for a few weeks from Scotland, as we always saw a good deal of them. The Duchess of Gordon I remember with her loud voice, and Lady Madelina Sinclair, talking of Rothiemurchus and Kinrara. Lord Gillies and Mrs Gillies, in his advocate days, when appeal cases brought him to London. The Redfearns, whom *I* never saw, the sight of me recalling her lost boy (with the drum) so vividly that she could not bear the shock. There were the Master of the Rolls and some few English lawyers, Mr Ward (Tremaine), Sir Griffin Wilson, and William Frere; and upon one occasion his intended wife Miss Gurdon, who sang with a voice and in a style only equalled by Catalani.

This year, after all the sickness, we went early to Tunbridge, my mother having suffered herself severely in consequence of her fatigue and anxiety. A large dull house, but a very comfortable one, was taken for us at the top of Sion Hill. It belonged to Mr Canning's mother, and had a really good garden, with a fine clump of shady trees in it, under which we children used to pass our days. My mother had some dislike to this place which suited all the rest of us so admirably, so, in the fiery month of June, we removed from this quiet, roomy, old-fashioned house to a smartened-up Grosvenor Lodge, a new bow-windowed villa on the London road, a full mile from the Wells, where the sun shone on us unmolested till we in the attics were nearly grilled; but we were in the world, as well as in the sunshine and the dust besides.

Aunt Leitch spent a short time with us at Grosvenor Lodge, and Annie Grant and Miss Maling. Aunt Leitch had been for some time a widow. She had given up Kilmerdinney to her husband's heir for a

consideration, and had joined in housekeeping with uncle Ralph, who had determined on letting Tennenochside and coming south for a few years, in order better to educate his two children. We had our Highland neighbours, Belleville and Mrs Macpherson, also here; of them we saw a great deal, having from first to last been always on the most friendly terms with them. My brother John, then Johnnie, a little creature in a nankin frock, and Belleville were so inseparable, that people soon began to look for them as one of the shows of the place, for they walked together in rather a singular manner. Belleville went first with his hands crossed behind his back, holding out his long stick, the end of which was taken by the child, who trotted on thus for hours, few words passing between the pair. Mrs Macpherson, who preferred the carriage, generally went an airing with us, my mother calling for her at her lodgings near the pantiles. We were really very happy this season at Tunbridge Wells, and so set up by the fine air that we could not have looked more healthy had we been in our own Duchus.

Upon looking over the doings of this year so far, I find I have forgotten to mention quite a remarkable circumstance. Mrs Charles Grant, the old director's wife, invited us three little girls to accompany my father and mother to a great party she was giving in Russell Square—a rout—and we all went. It was to meet the Persian ambassador, the same who was Mr Morier's friend, and who got on in every way so well in this country that many years afterwards he was sent here again. I cannot at this moment recollect his name; he was a tall handsome man, not very dark. He spoke English quite well enough to be understood, and turned all the women's heads with his beautiful Eastern dress and flatteries. He was remarkably fond of children, always liked to have some in the room with him, which was the reason we had been distinguished by this invitation. There was wonderful commotion in the green room which Jane and I shared in common, little Mary venturing to show herself there, as she had

been included among the company. Our dancing shoes, drab jean, were to do quite well, and cotton stockings, but we got new frocks of soft clear muslin, very full, with several deep tucks. All the three heads were fresh cropped and oiled, and as our toilets were being completed my mother entered, so beautifully dressed in white spotted muslin over straw-coloured silk, holding in her hands three pairs of white kid gloves, and three cairngorm crosses dangling to gold chains. Duncan Macintosh had given us the stones—found on our own hills—and she had had them set for us purposely to wear this evening. The Persian ambassador took a great deal of notice of us and of our sparkling crosses. Jane, of course, he most distinguished, her bright eyes and her rosy cheeks, and her lively natural manner equally free from forwardness or shyness, always ensured her the attention of strangers. Both she and I behaved extremely well, we were told next day, papa and mamma quite satisfied with us, and with our propriety in the cake line, just helping ourselves once, as we had been told, and no more. Mary was suspected of more frequent helpings, also she tired and fell asleep on Belleville's knee, for he and Mrs Macpherson were there. Mrs Macpherson said laughingly to my mother when the great Mirza (I am sure now that was one of his names) was occupied so much with Jane, not very far from where sat an elderly Miss Perry, another director's daughter, with an enormous turban on her head, and a fine cashmere on her shoulders: "What would *she* give to be the object of such attention?" the shawl and turban having been adopted, it was said, to attract the stranger, who had a wife and one little girl at home.

Aunt Mary had invited me to be present at a great solemnity at Oxford, the Installation of Lord Grenville as Chancellor of the University, which ceremony was to take place in the month of July of this summer, 1810. It was quite an era in my life, the first indeed of any moment, and it filled my young heart with a tumultuous pleasure I was for some days unable to control. It

was lucky for me that my father was from home, as he would have been very likely to have kept me there for showing myself so unfit to be trusted with my own conduct. We were never to annoy others with any excess of emotion, probably a good rule for such very excitable children, and yet it might have made us artificial, and it did afterwards make me appear affected, the struggle between feeling and fearing. I certainly did run a little wild on receiving aunt *Griffith's* letter (she liked us to call her by her husband's name). To visit alone! To go to the Theatre! Concerts! Inaugurations! See degrees conferred! Among such a crowd of great and noble, in classic Oxford, where stood Great Tom! It really half turned a head not then very steady. We had been reading Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, to initiate us into the realities of life and the truth of history; and such visions of display had been brought before us, of plumed helmets, coats of gilded mail, kings, queens, trains, escorts, etc., that, my aunt indulging a little in poetical anticipations of the splendid scenes she was asking me to witness, I took my seat beside my father in his post-chariot, with some idea that I had grown suddenly six feet high, twenty years older, and was the envy of every one. My father had come to us for a week's holiday after my first transport had cooled a little. The parting with them all made me grave enough, and it was soon quite unnecessary to caution me about expressing any exuberance of spirits. The first disappointment in this dream of pleasure was the conveyance we travelled in. I was accustomed to the barouche and four, the liveried servants, and all the stir of such an equipage; my father's plain post-chaise, pair of horses, and only one man, made no sensation along the road, neither at the inns nor in the villages. No one stared at so plain a carriage, nor was there any bustle in the inn-yards on our changing horses.

Arrived in London, the large empty house in Lincoln's Inn Fields was intolerable, not a creature there but the housemaid in charge of all the displaced

furniture, so that I wandered from one bare melancholy room to another in very tearful mood. In the Square it was no better, few of our young companions having remained in town—none that I cared for. Aunt Lissy was in Norfolk, my father occupied the whole day, so that except at meals I never saw him. There were plenty of books, however, and the pianoforte, and I had always work with me, but it was very lonely. One new delight reconciled me in some measure to this dull week. My mother had trusted me to buy myself shoes, gloves, ribbons, etc., required as additions to my moderate equipment, and I had the satisfaction of purchasing these supplies myself, entering the shops in Fleet Street, in great state, in front of my attendant the housemaid, asking for what I wanted, choosing and paying like a grown-up young lady. I was thirteen, Annie's age, but how far behind what she is in some respects, so ignorant of all useful things, so childish, so affected, so bewildered at having to act for myself; all our wants having been hitherto supplied without any trouble to us. Aunt Leitch had made me a present of a pound note to spend as I liked without question. I parted with it for a *parasol* with a plated stick and a carved ivory handle and a pagoda summit, of a pea-green silk with a dazzling fringe, altogether big enough to have acted as an umbrella, and under this canopy I strutted away with the dignity of a peacock, to the amusement, I should suppose, of every one that passed me.

I and my Chinese *parasol* were one morning in the Square, figuring before the nursery-maids, when an unusual sound yelled up from a corner of the gardens—the Searle Street corner—and a mob of dirty-looking men tumbled in over one another to the amount of hundreds. They had hardly rushed on as far as Lord Kenyon's high house, when from the Long Acre corner a troop of dragoons rattled in all haste, advancing towards the Surgeons' Hall, with gleaming sabres. The mob retreated steadily enough and slowly and unwillingly, but the horses moving on in their peculiar

way, turning their hind legs to the multitude occasionally, made good their determined pressure on the crowd, amid yells and shouts and many hisses. But the dragoons prevailed, as the imposing cavalry advanced so did the great unwashed retire, and soon the whole pageant vanished, the noise even gradually dying away in the distance. As quickly as we could recover our composure, all who had been sauntering in the Square regained their houses. At the corner gate I flew to, I and my precious parasol, I found my father's man, Mr Sims, waiting to escort me home. All the windows of the two lower storeys of all the houses in the Square were immediately closed, and the housemaid and I had to mount up to the very top of ours, to the barred windows of the nursery, to study the horse-tailed helmets of our patrol. Early next morning I was taken to Sandy Grant's chambers in Sergeant's Inn, the iron gates of which retirement were kept fast closed till Sir Francis Burdett had left the Tower, for he had been the cause of all this commotion. He was then the perfect idol of the people, their ideal of an English country gentleman. He supported this character in breeches and top-boots, and having a fair handsome person and good-humoured manners, he remained for many a year the king of the fiddlers. What his crime had been on this occasion, I forget, some disrespect to the House of Commons, I think, for they ordered him into custody, and sent him to the Tower by water to avoid ill consequences, his friends being above all things excitable. On the day of his release they had him to themselves, and had all their own way, filling the streets from end to end. Never was there such a *pack* of heads wedged close together, like Sir Walter Scott's description of the Porteous mob. Every window of the long, tall row of houses on either side was filled with women waving handkerchiefs and dark blue flags, the Burdett colour. The roar of voices and the tread of so many feet sounded awful even in the enclosed court; it penetrated to the back room where Mrs Sandy Grant and I were sitting.

I was to travel to Oxford with two friends of my uncle Griffith, Dr and Miss Williams. They accordingly called for me in a hack post-chaise, the first I had ever entered, and when I found myself seated in it, bodkin, my feet on straw, my little trunk corded on outside, the lining dirty, the windows rattling, the whole machine so rickety, and began to jolt along the paved streets with these very uninviting strangers, I could not help having rather melancholy regrets for Grosvenor Lodge, sunny as it was, my brothers and sisters and their merry ways, the open landau and four skimming over the roads, my mother's silk dresses, the well-bred servants, the polished luxury of home. I was indeed subdued, I sat quiet and silent, looking vacantly out at all the ugliness we travelled through. Dr Williams was reading a pamphlet, I am sure I wondered how he could keep his eyes steady on the lines; he made notes from time to time with a pencil on the pages of a pocket-book he kept open on his knee, then he would lie back as if in deep thought, and begin to read and write again; that was my left hand. Miss Williams had a squeaky voice, quite an irritant to a sensitive ear; she did not speak much, which was well, but what she did say was very kindly meant; I daresay I was a great bore to her and all her bags and parcels; that was my right. Straight before was a Humphrey Clinker whipping on two much-abused horses, very very unlike the four bays. At last we stopped at a pretty country inn near a wood, where we had luncheon, and then we all went out to gather wild-flowers, for Dr Williams was a botanist and had gone this, not the usual, road for the purpose of collecting specimens. We grew much more companionable; when he took my nosegay from me he seemed much pleased, he told me a great deal that I never forgot, showing me the form and the beauty of the simple flower and telling me what valuable qualities it sometimes lost when cultivation rendered it more lovely to the eye. He pressed among the leaves of a thick packet of blotting-paper such flowers as he had selected from our gatherings,

and then we resumed our journey in, I thought, a very much more comfortable chaise; the Doctor read less, the sister, though she still squeaked, talked more, and I chattered away very merrily. The latter part of the journey therefore passed pleasantly to me, while both answering and asking questions. A little packet of change with a memorandum of my share of the expenses was put into my hands as we were about entering Oxford, and in a few minutes, late in the evening, we stopped at my uncle's door—not the grand door opening on one of the quadrangles, approached by broad steps up to great gates kept by a porter in his lodge, all grand as a college should be, but a back door in a narrow lane, letting me in to the kitchen passage, up a stair to the hall, and so to the kindest welcome from both aunt and uncle who were standing there to receive me. I was just in time, they said, the house was to be full of company in a day or two, when the little housekeeper would find herself extremely useful. In the meanwhile I was introduced to all the apartments, made acquaintance with the different closets and their various keys, and was established myself in my aunt's dressing-room with a sofa bed to sleep on, and two drawers in her chest and my own trunk for my clothes, she taking charge of my balance of cash, remarking that it was very shabby of Dr Williams to have charged me with my expenses, as he must have had the chaise for himself and his sister at any rate, and he might have treated me to my luncheon, just eighteenpence, without any violent liberality. My Highland pride preferred having paid my share, but I said nothing, and I was silent about the balance too, which I knew my father had intended I should have kept in my own pocket; not that I wanted money, we had never been accustomed to have any.

The Master's lodgings at University College formed two sides of a quadrangle—no, not quite, one side and the half of another. The other half of the second side and the third were occupied as students' rooms; the fourth was the high wall of the Master's garden. It

was a large house containing a great many rooms of a good size, but inconveniently planned, several of them opening one out of another with no separate entrances and not proportioned properly, the whole of the one long side being wedge-shaped, the space twenty feet wide at the street end, and only ten at the garden end, the outer wall humouring the lane, instead of the lane having been made to follow the wall. The private apartments were on this side and very comfortable, though oddly shaped. There were on the other side two spare bedrooms with dressing-rooms for company, and at the head of the front staircase a nice cheerful room which was afterwards mine, but wanted at this time for Sir William Scott. Besides this great man a cousin Horseman arrived, and aunt Leitch and uncle Ralph and aunt Judy. Both ladies had been dressed by Miss Stewart for the occasion. Aunt Leitch always wore black, a Scotch fashion when a widow is no longer young; besides, it suited her figure, which had got large, and her rather high colour. She had good taste and looked extremely well, never wearing what did not become her, and choosing always what was plain and rich and fresh and well-fitting. A white chip bonnet and feathers made a great impression on me just now, so did a straw-coloured silk of my aunt Judy's, as she altered it to please herself. It was to be worn with handsomely embroidered white muslin gowns and a small cloak of like material trimmed with lace, and all the broad hem round lined with straw-coloured satin ribbon; the shape of the bonnet was such as was worn at the time, rather a close cottage, if I remember, with a long feather laid across it very prettily. My uncle had chosen the whole dress and spared no expense to have his oddity of a little wife made to look somewhat like other people. The first day it was all very well, but the second no one would have known her; both cloak and bonnet were so disfigured by the changes she had made in them, that their singularity and her high-heeled shoes—for she had never yet been persuaded to lay her stilts aside—really made us all feel for my uncle,

who was certainly very angry, though he was prepared for the exhibition, she never having then nor since received any article of any description from any person, however celebrated, without altering it, if it could be done; her own taste being, according to her, unimpeachable, and all these lower natures requiring the finishing touch of her refinement to make her the most perfect object that ever vexed a sensitive husband.

I have a much more distinct recollection of this affair, of nipping the sugar, setting out the desserts, giving out the linen, running all the messages, than I have of all the classic gaieties of the week, though I was kindly taken to all of them. In fact I fancy they had disappointed me, read me another lesson, for, as far as I remember, hope never intoxicated me again; I never felt again as I had felt at Grosvenor Lodge, on the day of receiving my aunt's invitation. The theatre, for one thing, had been a shock, where I had expected to be charmed with a play, instead of being nearly set to sleep by discourses in Latin from a pulpit. There were some purple and some gold, some robes and some wigs, a great crowd and some stir at times, when a deal of humdrum speaking and dumb show was followed by the noisy demonstrations of the students as they applauded or condemned the honours bestowed; but in the main I tired of the heat and the mob, and the worry of these mornings, and so, depend upon it, did poor Lord Grenville, who sat up in his chair of state among the dignitaries, like the Grand Lama in his temple guarded by his priests. The concerts, though, were delightful. There, for the first and only time in my life, I heard Catalani. I don't think her singing, her Rule Britannia, above all her "*Gott save the King*," will ever go out of my head. She was the first Italian woman I had noticed, and much her large, peculiarly set eyes, her open forehead, pale dark complexion and vivacity of countenance struck me. She was very handsome. We had Braham, too, with his unequalled voice and fine bravura style, and my old acquaintance from the Hanover Square Rooms; Mrs Bianchi indeed always

went about with Catalani to teach her her songs, the great singer not knowing a note of music; indeed her ear was defective, it was a chance her gaining the pitch of the accompaniment; if she did, all was right, for she kept on as she set out, so it was generally sounded for her by her friend, and then off she went like nobody else that ever succeeded her.

Well, all this over, the company gone, the actors and the spectators departed, the term over, Oxford deserted, my regular life there began. In the morning I read both in French and in English to my aunt, took one walk a day with old Anne, who dressed herself in a black mode cloak that had arm-holes to let the arms through, and a small black bonnet, to attend upon me. I gave out the good things from the storeroom, sometimes naughtily helping myself, played in the garden at walking like a lady with a phantom companion, to whom I addressed some very brilliant observations, went visiting sometimes with my aunt, and helped her to patch, for that favourite work still continued although the whole house was decorated with her labours. Borders of patchwork went round all the sofa and chair covers, and my room went by the name of the patchwork room because the bed and the window curtains were all trimmed with this bordering. My aunt kept her house very neat and clean, as it deserved to be kept, for my uncle and the college together had fitted it up handsomely. The woodwork was all dark oak highly polished and carved. The chimney-pieces were of stone, of antique form, suited to a college of Alfred's (?) days, and then with my uncle's ingenious turn for nick-nackities of his own production it was filled with ornamental trifles, all in keeping with the grave air of his college residence. The walls of some rooms were hung with his poker-paintings, pictures burned on wood by hot irons; others had his drawings framed; the plants were in pots painted Etruscan; some windows screened by transparencies. He was never idle, sketching or finishing his sketches filling up any unoccupied time. They had three old servants, a man and two

maids, who did all the work of that large house. William and old Anne had lived with my uncle at his living of Whitchurch in his bachelor days. Nanny was added on his marriage, and the three remained with him till his death, when William was made porter to the college, and Anne and Nanny accompanied my aunt to her small house in Holywell.

I was beginning to tire of being "burd alane," kind and indulgent as were my aunt and uncle, when a letter arrived from my mother that caused a number of mysterious consultations. Though I was never admitted to the secret tribunal in the study, I heard afterwards up in my aunt's boudoir most of all that had been discussed. The question was concerning a proposition made by my mother to this effect, that instead of reclaiming me, my sister Jane should be sent to bear me company. My father found it necessary to proceed immediately to the Highlands, and not intending to remain there long, it being now late in the season, he did not wish to encumber his party with all his children and a governess, for we elder ones could not well be let to run wild any longer; and if our uncle Griffith would let us stay with him and my aunt would take the trouble to look a little after us, and choose us good masters, we were anxious enough to learn to ensure our making good profit of such instruction. A delay of two or three days resulted in an answer such as was expected. I had a peep of father, mother, brothers, and little sister, for William's holidays enabled him to travel with them, and then Jane and I were left by ourselves to make the best of it. It was a great trial, this arrangement, to have to give up the Highlands, to be separated, we who were all so happy together, and whose hearts were in Rothiemurchus. Many a passion of tears our little patchwork room witnessed for the first week. Afterwards our young spirits revived, and we set ourselves to work in earnest to be busy and happy in our new circumstances.

CHAPTER VII

1810-1811

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE is said to be the most ancient of all the Colleges in Oxford, as may be supposed from King Alfred getting the credit of being its founder. The two quadrangles which form the principal part of the edifice occupy a considerable space in the High Street; each quadrangle is entered through large arched gateways approached by flights of broad steps. The line of building separating the two quadrangles extends sufficiently behind to separate the Master's gardens from the Fellows'. It is appropriated to the kitchen offices principally. My uncle's lodgings forming a larger house than he required, he let some of the upper rooms of the side looking to the street, retaining on the ground-floor a dining-room, drawing-room and pantry, two bedrooms, with two dressing-closets above. The upper storey he let. The other side, the *wedge*, contained on the ground-floor the hall and staircase, back passage and back staircase, the study, and through the study the library, a very long room filled with old dusty books in cases all round, reaching from the floor to the ceiling; most of these books were unreadable, being a collection of divinity from very ancient times, belonging to the College, and not of late much added to. In this room there was no furniture, neither curtains, nor carpet, nor fireplace; but three chairs, one table, and a pianoforte were put into it for us, and this was our schoolroom. Through this library was a small room with a fireplace, used by my

uncle to heat his irons for his poker-painting ; this little room opened into a pretty garden, where our happiest hours were spent. Over this suite were the private apartments of my uncle and aunt, and our patchwork room. Above again were the servants' rooms, storeroom, and lumber rooms. The kitchens were underground. It was all very nice, except that long melancholy library, which was always like a prison to us ; there was no view from the windows, no sun till quite late in the day, not an object to distract our attention from our business. A judicious arrangement perhaps ; we lost no time there certainly. Mr Vickery, the organist of Magdalen, taught us music, he was clever, but perfectly mad ; half his lesson he spent in chattering, the other half in dancing. So except my aunt came in, or he thought she was coming, we got very little instruction from him. Our writing master was an elderly man of the name of Vincent, much in the same style as our old friend Mr Thompson ; he, however, taught nothing beyond writing and arithmetic and the mending of pens, which last accomplishment we found about as useful an art as any of the many we learned. Our aunt was so kind as to keep us up in history, geography, French, etc., and our uncle, with his refined tastes and his many accomplishments, was of the utmost use to us in fixing our attention on wiser things than had hitherto chiefly employed us. For one thing, he opened to us what had been till then a sealed book—the New Testament. He taught us to make its precepts a rule of life, showed us that part of our Saviour's mission here on earth was to be to us an example, and he explained the Catechism so clearly that we, who had always just learned it by rote every Sunday most grudgingly, now took pleasure in repeating what we understood and found was to be of use. My little artifices and equivocations were never passed by him, but they were so kindly checked, so reproved as a duty, that I soon disliked to pain him by employing them. Neither did I find such subterfuges necessary. No one punished me for accidental faults, nor was a harsh word ever addressed to me, I therefore insensibly

lost the bad habits given by our nursery miseries. Truly this visit to Oxford was one of the fortunate chances of my life.

My uncle was invariably good to me, but Jane was his favourite, honest, natural, truthful Jane. Her love of reading, drawing, gardening, and poetry, kept them constantly together, while I was more my aunt's companion. Still, we were often dull, for they were a good deal out at dinner with the other Heads of Houses, and then we had long evenings alone in the study, Anne popping up every now and then to look after us. We were allowed to make tea for ourselves, and we had tea to breakfast, and butter upon our bread, and a small glass of ale—College home-brewed ale—at dinner. How fat we got! Our regular walk was our only grievance. Neither my aunt nor Anne would let us run, it was not considered correct to run in Oxford, not even in the parks nor in the Christ Church meadows; we were to move sedately on, arm in arm, for our arms were not allowed to fall naturally; they were placed by my aunt in what she called a graceful position, and so they were to remain, and when we remonstrated and said mamma had never stiffened us up so, we were told that my mother was by no means a model of elegance, a sort of heresy in our ears, we being persuaded she was as near perfection as mortal woman could be. We were quite shocked to find her not appreciated. How we skipped upstairs for our bonnets when my uncle proposed to walk out with us! No graceful arm in arm for him! The moment we were out of the town, away we raced just as we liked, off to Joe Pullen's tree, or along the London roadway, round the Christ Church meadows. If old Anne could but have seen us! We told her of our doings though, which was some satisfaction. Sometimes our walks with him were quieter. He took us into the different colleges, to show us the Hall of one, the stained-glass windows of another, the chapel of a third. He told us of the histories of the founders, with the dates of their times, and he gave us short sketches of the manners of those days, adverting to the events then

passing, the advance of some arts since, the point at which a certain style of architecture, for instance, had stopped. We went over the Bodleian and the Radcliffe Libraries, and to the museum and the theatre and the schools, and very often we returned to the chapel window at New College, and the picture over the communion table at Magdalen—Christ bearing the Cross—supposed to be Spanish, and perhaps by Velasquez; it had been taken in a ship that had sailed from a port in Spain. Sometimes he made us write little essays on different subjects in prose, and try to rhyme, beginning with *bouts-rimés*, at which my aunt beat us all. I cannot say that my versifying ever did him or me much credit, but I poetised capitally in prose, while Jane strung off couplets by the hundred with very little trouble beyond writing them down. My uncle could versify by the hour.

He had an immensity of fun in him besides this readiness, and was the author of many satirical pleasantries and political squibs called forth by the events of the day, some of which found their way into the newspapers, as—

Sir Arthur, Sir Arthur, Sir Hew and Sir Harry
Sailed boldly from England to Spain,
But not liking long there to tarry,
They wisely sailed all back again.

“Sir Arthur” was the Duke of Wellington. His second sailing did better. Then there was—

The city of Lisbon.
The gold that lay in the city of Lisbon.

which in our volume had little coloured vignettes all down the page, representing the subject of each new announcement. “The Court of Enquiry,” with little officers in regimentals seated all round a table; the “Fraternal Hug” of the French ally to the poor overwhelmed Portuguese, etc. His caricatures were admirable, particularly of living characters, the like-

nesses were so perfect. Some of these he composed on the common playing-cards, the hearts and diamonds being most humorously turned into faces, hands, furniture, etc. He began a series from Shakespeare, which are really fine as compositions. His graver style, whether in water-colours, chalks, reeds, or burnt in, are considered to have shown great genius, his many sketches from nature being particularly valuable, from their spirit and truthfulness. There were portfolios full of these in their ruder states, hundreds finished, framed, and dispersed among his friends. We had a great many at the Doune taken in Rothiemurchus, Dunkeld, and the West Highlands. My aunt's little boudoir was hung round with others. In his dining-room were more; there were some at the Bodleian, and the altar-piece in his own College chapel—Christ blessing the Bread—was of his own poker-painting. In the museum was a head, I think of Leicester; and while we were with him he was busy with a tiger the size of life, the colouring of the old oak panel and the various tints burned on it so perfectly suiting the tiger's skin. Jane was his great assistant in this work, heating the irons for him in the little end room, and often burning portions of the picture herself. A print was taken from his water-colour drawing of part of the High Street, in which his own College figures conspicuously. They are rare now, as he sold none. One was afterwards given to me, which we have framed and hung in our entrance hall.

Two facts struck me, young as I was, during our residence at Oxford; the ultra-Tory politics and the stupidity and frivolity of the society. The various Heads, with their respective wives, were extremely inferior to my uncle and aunt. More than half of the Doctors of Divinity were of humble origin, the sons of small gentry or country clergy, or even of a lower grade; many of these, constant to the loves of their youth, brought ladies of inferior manners to grace what appeared to them so dignified a station. It was not a good style; there was little talent and less polish and no sort of knowledge of the world, and yet the ignorance

of this class was less offensive than the assumption of another, where a lady of high degree had fallen in love with her brother's tutor and got him handsomely provided for in the church that she might excuse herself for marrying him. Of the lesser clergy there were young witty ones, odious, and young learned ones, bores, and elderly ones, pompous; all, of all grades, kind and hospitable. But the Christian pastor, humble and gentle, and considerate and self-sacrificing, occupied with his duties, and filled with the "charity" of his Master, had no representative, as far as I could see, among these dealers in old wines, rich dinners, fine china, and massive plate. The religion of Oxford appeared in those days to consist in honouring the king and his *ministers*, and in perpetually popping in and out of chapel. All the Saints' days and all the eves of Saints' days were kept holy, every morning and every evening there were prayers in every College chapel, lengthened on Wednesdays and Fridays by the addition of the Litany. My uncle attended the morning prayers regularly, Jane and I with him, all being roused by the strokes of a big hammer, beaten on every staircase half an hour before by a scout. In the afternoons he frequently omitted this duty, as the hour, six o'clock, interfered with the dinner-parties, the company at that time assembling about five. The education was suited to the divinity. A sort of supervision was said to be kept over the young riotous community, and to a certain extent the Proctors of the University and the Deans of the different Colleges did see that no very open scandals were committed. There were rules that had in a general way to be obeyed, and there were lectures that must be attended, but as for care to give high aims, provide refining amusements, give a worthy tone to the character of responsible beings, there was none ever even thought of it. The very meaning of the word education did not appear to be understood. The College was a fit sequel to the school. The young men herded together, they lived in their rooms, or they lived out of them in the neighbouring villages, where many

had comfortable establishments. Some liked study, attended the lectures, and read up with their tutors, laughed at by the others who preferred hunting, gaming, supper parties, etc. The chapel-going was felt to be "an uncommon bore," and was shirked as much as possible, little matter, as no good could possibly follow so vain a ceremony. All sorts of contrivances were resorted to, to enable the dissipated to remain out at night, to shield a culprit, to deceive the dignitaries. It was a drive at random of a low and most thoughtless kind; the extravagance consequent on which often ruined parents who had sacrificed much to give a son the much-prized university education. The only care the Heads appeared to take with regard to the young minds they were supposed to be placed where they were and paid well to help to form, was to keep the persons of the students at the greatest possible distance. They conversed with them never, invited them to their homes never, spoke or thought about them never. A perpetual bowing was their only intercourse; a bow of humble respect acknowledged by one of stiff condescension limited the intercourse of the old heads and the young, generally speaking. Of course there were exceptional cases, and the Deans and the tutors were on more familiar terms with the students, but quite in the teacher and pupil style, very little of the anxious improver on one side, and the eager for knowledge on the other. I do not know what encouragement was given to the "excelsior" few, but I well remember the kind of punishment inflicted on the erring many, sufficient perhaps for the faults noticed. Too late out, not at chapel, noise at lecture—these delinquencies doomed the perpetrators to an "imposition." A certain number of pages from a classic author *transcribed*, that was all, in a legible hand. A task that really was of some use, though no one would think it, for several decent young men belonging to the town made a livelihood by writing them at so much a page. There was a settled price, and when the clean-looking leaves had been turned over by my uncle, for it was into the study of the Head

that these mockeries had to be delivered, my aunt claimed them, as she found them invaluable for patch papers. Mr Rowley, the Dean, had drawn for her, with a great array of compasses, a small hexagon, which she had had executed in tin, and after this pattern she cut up all these papers, sitting between dinner and tea, while my uncle finished his port wine.

Our breakfast hour was at nine o'clock; dinner was at four, except on company days, when it was half an hour later, and such dinners! The College cook dressed them. The markets were ransacked for luxuries, the rich contents of the cellar brought out, port, sherry, and madeira of vintages most prized some twenty years before; beautiful plate, the best glass and china and table linen; desserts of equal costliness; big men in wide silk cassocks that would have stood alone, scarves besides, and bands; one or two of the older men in powdered wigs. Sixteen the table held. The ladies were very fine, quite as particular about their fashions, and as expensive too, as the husbands were about the wines, very condescending too in manner to one another. Mr Moises used to say that the two little girls in white frocks were the only live creatures that looked real amongst them all. It was certainly an unnaturally constrained life that these people passed at Oxford. To us the dulness was intolerable; we were often oppressed by it even to tears, as our pillows and a large red mulberry tree in the garden could have testified, for to the garden we generally repaired to recover from these occasional fits of melancholy and to read over and over again our mother's letters from the Doune.

We were one sunny afternoon sitting under the mulberry tree, tired with searching on the grass round its trunk for the fine ripe fruit which had fallen thickly there, and which, after all, we thought, came next to guignes, when a window at that side of the quadrangle to which the College kitchens were attached opened, and a curly head was thrust out, to which belonged very bright eyes and very blooming cheeks, and a

mouth wide opened by laughter. It was an upper window belonging to a suite of rooms let to the students. "Little girl," said the head, "how do you sell your mulberries?" "They are not ours, sir," said Jane—she was always the spokeswoman—"we cannot sell them." "You can only eat them, eh?" said the head again, and many voices from behind joined in the laughter. "Jane," said I, "don't go on talking to that young man, my aunt would not like it." "Nonsense," said Jane, "where's the harm of answering a question?" "Well, little girls, won't you sell me some mulberries? I'll give you a tune on the French horn for them." And thereupon our new acquaintance began to play, we thought beautifully, upon an instrument that we thought charming. "A basket full of mulberries for a tune, eh? My aunt won't be angry." A basket with a string to it dangled from the window. But we were firm; we refused to fill it. And because we were such very good, honest little girls, we had a great many tunes on the French horn played to us for nothing, till I, who was always a coward, coaxed Jane away. It was getting near the dinner hour. My uncle's man William, regularly as old Anne began to dish, crossed the garden to the private door of the buttery, where he went daily for ale. We thought it best, therefore, to retire from this first interview with our musical acquaintance, although we were not sufficiently modest to avoid the chances of succeeding ones. Indeed that corner of the garden was so shady, so out of the way of my aunt's windows and so near the mulberry tree, that we naturally preferred to amuse ourselves there; the head and the horn as naturally continued to appear, till at length we grew so friendly as to take their acquaintances into the alliance, and we found ourselves chatting and laughing merrily with about a dozen commoners.

"Pray, Mr Rowley," said my uncle the Master one day to the Dean, "who plays the French horn here in College? No very studious young gentleman, I should think." "Mr So-and-So," said Mr Rowley. (Is it not strange that I should have completely forgotten

our friend's name?) "He is no bad performer, I believe, and a very quiet young man," etc. etc. We were crimson, we bent over our work in very shame, certain that our highly improper flirtation had been discovered, and that this conversation was meant as a hint for us to behave ourselves. I daresay neither my uncle nor Mr Rowley had the least notion of our musical propensities, and were only mentioning a simple fact, but conscience terrified us too much to allow of our ever haunting the buttery steps again.

This recreation being at an end, we began another. My aunt obliged us to darn our stockings every week when they came from the washing, up in our own room. That is, obliged *me* to darn them, for Jane couldn't work and wouldn't work,—the only specimen of her abilities in this feminine accomplishment during our Oxford visit being the rather singular piece of patch-work which always stays on the chimney-piece in my room, and which I use as a kettle-holder. She read to me while I worked, and this made the time pass more pleasantly. My uncle's lodgings, as I have mentioned, occupied two sides of the square of buildings forming the inner quadrangle. Our room was close to the corner, at right angles with the spare apartments he had let for college rooms. The nearest set to us was occupied by a Mr Coxe, a very tall young man from Yorkshire, with a remarkably loud voice, as we knew by the tone in which it was his habit to read aloud, for the weather being warm and the windows open, we could hear him distinctly spouting from book or from memory as he paced up and down his study. We could see him too, for we were very close neighbours, when either he or we looked out of our casements, and as he acted the parts he was speaking with much emphasis, I found it much more amusing to watch Mr Coxe's antics than to fill up the great holes Jane thumped out in the heels of her stockings. Down therefore went my hands, and forward stretched my neck, intent as I was on the scene enacting, when Mr Coxe, finding himself noticed, so increased the force with which he ranted,

that I could not contain my laughter. At this he humbly bowed, his hand upon his heart. I laughed the more. He shook his head; he clasped his hands; he threw his arms here and there, starting, stamping, and always roaring. In short, the pantomime proceeded with vigour to a most amusing height before Jane, who was sitting below me faithfully reading through the pages of the *Spectator*, perceived what was going on. Some one else must have perceived it too, probably Mr Rowley, who was always prowling about, for though neither he, nor my uncle, nor my aunt ever mentioned the subject to us, muslin blinds were fastened to our windows next day, which we were on no account to displace, and we were ordered in future to take all our mendings down to that horrid and most melancholy library, where my aunt said that we were more within her reach should she want us. Mr Coxe was really very diverting, I regretted losing his theatricals extremely.

The young men had a hundred ways of amusing themselves, quite independent of the Master's childish nieces. Mr Rowley having made himself disagreeable to some of his pupils who found it suit their health to take long rides in the country, they all turned out one night to hunt the *fox* under his window. A Mr Fox, in a red waistcoat and some kind of a skin for a cap, was let loose on the grass in the middle of the quadrangle, with the whole pack of his fellow-students barking around him. There were cracking whips, shrill whistles, loud halloos, and louder hark-aways, quite enough to frighten the dignitaries. When those great persons assembled to encounter this confusion, all concerned skipped off up the different staircases, like so many rats to their holes, and I don't believe any of them were ever regularly discovered, though suspected individuals were warned as to the future. Mr Fox, I remember, was found quietly reading in his room, undisturbed by all the tumult, although a little flurried by the authoritative knocks which forced him, at that hour of the night, to unlock his door! My uncle was

very mild in his rule; yet there were circumstances which roused the indignation of the quietest colleges.

The ringleader in every species of mischief within our grave walls was Mr Shelley, afterwards so celebrated, though I should think to the end half-crazy. He began his career by every kind of wild prank at Eton, and when kindly remonstrated with by his tutor, repaid the well-meant private admonition by spilling an acid over the carpet of that gentleman's study, a new purchase, which he thus completely destroyed. He did no deed so mischievous at University, but he was very insubordinate, always infringing some rule, the breaking of which he knew could not be overlooked. He was slovenly in his dress, and when spoken to about these and other irregularities, he was in the habit of making such extraordinary gestures, expressive of his humility under reproof, as to upset first the gravity, and then the temper, of the lecturing tutor. Of course these scenes reached unpleasant lengths, and when he proceeded so far as to paste up atheistical squibs on the chapel doors, it was considered necessary to expel him, privately, out of regard for Sir Timothy Shelley, the father, who, being written to concerning his wayward son, arrived in much anxiety, had a long conference with my uncle in the study, to which presently both the young man and Mr Rowley were admitted, and then Sir Timothy and his son left Oxford together. Quiet was restored to our sober walls after this disturber of its peace had been got rid of, although some suspicious circumstances connected with the welfare of a principal favourite of my aunt's still required to be elucidated, as Mr Rowley said, and at once checked.

Our inner quadrangle had buildings on only three of its sides, the fourth side was a wall, a high wall, the wall of the Master's garden. The centre part of this wall was raised a few feet higher than the lengths on either hand, carved in a sort of scroll. Against this more elevated portion on the garden side was trained a fruit-tree, a baking pear, very old and very sturdy,

with great branching arms spread regularly at equal distances from bottom to top, a perfect step-ladder! The defences of the garden on the stable side next the lane were of no moment, very easily surmounted, and the vigilant eyes of Mr Rowley had discovered, on the College side of the high pear-tree wall, certain indications of the pear-tree's use to those tenants, steady or unsteady, who returned from their rambles later than suited the books of the porter's lodge. The pear-tree must come down, beautifully as it was trained, splendid as the fruit was—large brown pears on which my aunt reckoned for her second course dishes. The wall, too, looked so bare without it. My aunt never thoroughly forgave Mr Rowley for this extreme of discipline, and, like Mr Balquhiddie's cow, the pears grew so in size and flavour, and the tree became so wonderfully fruitful after its decease, that my uncle, after enduring a fair allowance of lamentations for it, had to forbid the subject. I have often thought since when on my hobby—as my brother John calls my educating mania—that if we were to make wise matters more lovable, young ardent spirits would not waste the activity natural to their age on follies. Too much work we hardly any of us have, but work too dry, work too absorbing, work unsuitable, is the work cut out for and screwed on to every young mind of every nature that falls under the iron rule of school or college. Learning is such a delight, there must be some error in the teaching when the scholars shirk it and debase themselves to merely sensual pleasures, of a low order too, drinking, gambling, and the like pursuits, which caused the destruction of the pear-tree.

I am setting down all my Oxford experiences together, without regard to vacation or term time, an unclassical proceeding, which, if I had thought about it, I would not have done. The long vacation began soon after the Commemoration was over in July, and lasted till October, and though some reading men remained to study, and some of the Fellows came and went, Oxford was empty for the time of all the hubbub I had

gone to form a part of till close upon Gaudy day. My uncle and aunt, however, remained there till the month of September, when they went to Cheltenham for a few weeks on account of my uncle's health, and took us with them. William, the man-servant, attended us, but neither of the maids; we were to wait on our aunt and on each other. Our lodgings were small but very neat, as every lodging was at Cheltenham. We had a good drawing-room and small dining-room over a cabinetmaker's shop, and bedrooms above. We were just opposite to a chemist's, beside whose house was the paved alley which led past the old church to the walk up to the old Wells at the end of the avenue. We all drank the waters and we all ate famous breakfasts afterwards, and Jane and I, out most of the day with my uncle, were so happy wandering about the outskirts of what was then only a pretty village, that we much regretted remaining here so short a time. My aunt, who walked less, and who could patch away anywhere, preferred, of course, her comfortable home, for she had found few acquaintances in Cheltenham; only old Mrs Colonel Ironside, the widow of the Indian cousin in whose gay London house she had spent such happy times in her young days, and Admiral Ricketts, Mrs Ironside's nephew, with his kind Irish wife. We saw very little of any of them; I fancy morning calls had been the extent of the civilities. What I recollect of Cheltenham is the beautiful scenery. The long turning High Street, the rich well-wooded plain the town was settled in, the boundary of low hills, Malvern in the distance, and that charming Well walk, always shady, where we were told the King and Queen had appeared by seven o'clock in the morning, when His Majesty King George the Third had been ordered by his physicians to try the waters. Half a lifetime afterwards, when I returned married from India and revisited this pretty place, I remembered it all as it had been, even found my way about it, though so altered, and I must say I regretted that the lovely rural village had grown into a large town, beautiful still with its

hundreds of handsome villas and long streets of excellent houses, but not half so pleasing to me as it was in the "olden time." I hear now that they have cut down the fine avenue that shaded the old Well walk, built rows of shops from the Crescent up to the old pump-room, and that the town extends through the fields beyond. The children of these times will be tired before getting to their country walks. Jane and I had green fields to run in.

On returning to Oxford we all resumed our graver habits. Jane and I had that odious library and our masters; my uncle and aunt the duties of society. All the great people having reassembled, they had all to interchange their calls and then to invite one another to dinner. In the evenings sometimes there were routs—thirty or forty people to tea and cards, refreshments handed round before separating. Jane and I were spared appearing at the desserts; we were found in the drawing-room by the ladies, dressed in the fine muslin frocks bought for the Persian ambassador, with the gold chains and the cairngorm crosses, of course; we sat up as late as the company stayed, and were much noticed; luckily the home parties were not many. The ladies were really all so commonplace, they made little impression. The Principal of Jesus College, Dr Hughes, a most huge mountain of a Welshman, was our particular favourite among the gentlemen, I believe because he let each of us sit in the large silver punch-bowl belonging to his Headship. It held Jane easily. Dr Williams never got into my good graces, nor Mr Rowley, he was such a little ugly and very pompous man. Mr Moises we were very fond of. A particular friend of my uncle's, the son of that Newcastle school-master who educated Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell, Mr Collins, then rather a beau, was another great ally of ours. They were all clergymen, as were most of the travellers who paid passing visits. Lord Eldon never happened to come to my uncle's when I was there, though they were so intimate as to correspond. Lord Chancellors have not much time for travelling; besides,

the King was in very uncertain health just then, giving everybody about him a good deal of uneasiness. Lord Stowell, then Sir William Scott, was often with us, and a very agreeable old man he was.

What strange women those two clever brothers married! Lady Eldon's was a runaway affair and she had not a penny, but she was very beautiful, and to the last hour of her life retained her husband's affections, in spite of her eccentricities. Latterly she was never seen but by him. She lived up in her own rooms dressed in a hat and habit, and was called too much of an invalid to see visitors. But she got up to make his breakfast every morning, however early he required it, as she had done from the day of their marriage; nothing ever prevented this but her two or three confinements; on other occasions, when indisposed with colds or headaches, she still waited on him, and returned to bed when he went off to court or chambers. She never learned that they were rich. When he was making thousands at the bar, and later when his official salary was so large, she continued the careful management of their early struggling days, locking up stores and looking after remains, and herself counting the coal-sacks, making the carters hold up the bags and shake them as they were emptied into the cellars, she standing at the window of her lord's handsome house in her hat and habit, giving a little nod as each empty sack was laid upon the pavement.

Lady Scott was still more thrifty, at least we heard a great many more stories concerning her oddities. She had money and no beauty; and if there ever had been any love it did not last long, for they were little together. He was said to be miserly too, but he was not miserable. She grudged him his clean shirt daily, and used to take a day's wear out of the cast one herself, putting it on instead of a bed-gown, thereby saving that article in her own wardrobe. Then she allowed him but one towel a week, and Mr Collins had a story of her, that on closing a visit to a friend of his, she entered her hostess's presence before taking leave, laden

with a pile of towels, which she thought it her duty to bring to view, in order to expose the extravagance of the servants who had supplied them so profusely, priding herself on having used but two, one for herself and one for Sir William! There were tales of her serving up chickens reheated, and having wings and legs of some fictitious kind skewered on in place of the real ones which had been eaten; of a leg of mutton doing duty all the week; of her cutting a turkey in two when she found her son dined out, and on his returning unexpectedly, sewing the turkey up again. Mr Collins and Mr Moises, both north-countrymen, used to keep us laughing by the hour at all the oddities they told of her. She died at last, but long after this, and he made a second unlucky venture. Old Lady Sligo, the dowager of her day, was a worse wife than this first one. Why they married at their advanced age no one could fancy. She was near seventy, and he was past it. He had both a son and a daughter, the daughter very agreeable. She was often at Oxford as Mrs Townsend, and occasionally after becoming Lady Sidmouth; and as she had been at school with aunt Lissy, we imputed this also as a merit to her.

We remained at Oxford until the spring of 1811. It was in the month of March that my father and mother arrived from Scotland for us. Whether my father travelled with his own horses this time I forget. I daresay he did, and had kept them all four and the coachman all this time at the hotel in Edinburgh. He did not hurry away as was his usual habit everywhere, he stayed a few days to show the beauties of Oxford to Miss Balfour. Amongst other sights they went to see Great Tom, which I had no mind to do; hearing him every night booming so grandly over the quiet around quite satisfied me, for the sound was very fine, coming in too just after the little "merry, merry Christ Church bells." Jane, who was of an inquisitive turn, decided upon mounting up all those long stairs in order to understand the real size of the monster. Once up, she would go in and under it, and remain in it just to hear

one toll. Poor child! she dropped as if shot, was carried out into the air, brought home still senseless, laid in bed, Dr Williams sent for, the whole house in despair. Doctor Williams recommended her being left to nature, he apprehended no danger; the nerves had received a shock and they must be left to recover, and they did recover. She wakened next morning as if she had merely had a good night's sleep, recollecting nothing, however, beyond her last-expressed wish to see the great tongue moved by the men who pulled it with a rope, so very differently from the ringing of the other bells.

We were sorry to leave our kind uncle and aunt, but we were not sorry to resume the freedom of our home life, after the restraint in fashion at University. We found the house in Lincoln's Inn Fields in great order, which was strange, considering that the servants had had nothing to do but to clean it up for months back. A great pleasure was preparing for us. Annie Grant came to live with us, and as the changes consequent upon this agreeable addition to our home-party had much influence over the well-being of the younger members of the family, I will make a pause in this particular era—draw one of the long strokes between this and more trifling days, and begin again after this resting-point.

CHAPTER VIII

1811-1812

ANNIE GRANT was the "accidental" daughter—to use a very delicate expression a very refined lady once used to me, when compelled to employ some term of this sort—of old Colonel William Grant with the long queue, my father's half great-uncle, my great-grand-uncle, who had long lived at the Croft. The first time my mother saw her she was herding some cows in the Lochan Mor (a boggy swamp, afterwards drained by Mr Cameron), standing beneath the shelter of a high bank of hanging birch, no shoes upon her feet nor hat upon her head, her knitting in her hands, her short dark petticoat, white jacket, and braided snooded hair combining to present a perfect model of Highland beauty. I wonder if Mrs General N—— when the great lady at Cawnpore, the most favoured guest at Newstead Abbey, the honoured of Kensington Palace, where more than once she dined with the Duke of Sussex—did she ever wander back in thought to the days of her simple youth? In those early days she was not taught to expect much notice, neither did she receive much; her mother was her father's housekeeper, and brought up her children, Annie and her brother Peter, in her own station, sending them to the parish school, and never obtruding them or herself on any of "the family." After the old Colonel's death she, still a very beautiful woman, married his grieve, and went to settle in another part of the country. The Colonel had been married in middle life to an Irishwoman, a Mrs

Dashwood ; they had never had any children, so he left his savings—these Highlanders have always savings—to Annie and her brother, some £2000 or better. My father as head of the house was their guardian. Peter was sent to a better school. Annie was taken by Captain Lewis Grant and his odd wife to keep the keys of their small establishment, an office regularly filled in every household then by such stray maidens of the race as were in want of a home. When Mrs Grant died the Lady Logie took charge of Annie, who seemed never to be lost sight of among her kith and kin, however irregularly she had arrived among them. The Lady Logie “had her to school” at Forres, where she received a good plain education, and as much instruction in music as, assisted by the ear of her race, enabled her to play the airs of her own country, grave and lively, with an expression very delightful. On the death of the Lady Logie (my father’s aunt) it was determined the poor girl should earn a home for herself. She was accordingly brought to London to our house, and after being a few weeks with us she was bound apprentice to the Miss Stewarts, the celebrated dressmakers. Maybe, in their workroom, she well remembered her free hours in the Lochan Mor. For her own happiness, herself and her little fortune would probably have been better bestowed on some young farmer in her native north, but this was an age of unnatural notions ; accomplished girls, portionless and homeless, were made into governesses, and for the less instructed there was nothing dreamed of but the dressmaking, a trade never over-stocked, its victims dying off quite as quickly as the vacant places were demanded. For some years all went smoothly. Annie was a favourite, and never overworked except at special busy times. Every Sunday while we were in town she spent with us, often coming to us on the Saturday. Every summer she had her holiday, which all of us enjoyed as much as she did, for not only we, but all who came to our house, were fond of her. At length came the time when the two old Miss Stewarts were to

resign the business, as had been agreed on, to Annie Grant and Jessie Stewart, on terms which had been previously settled. A word of dissatisfaction had never been uttered on their part, till out came the astounding news that they had sold their house and business more advantageously. Jessie Stewart had no refuge but the arms of a lover, to whom through many years of poverty she made the most exemplary wife, bearing severe trials with patience and afterwards an exalted position meekly. Her husband has long been a leading man, living in the best society.

Annie Grant was received by my father and mother, I may say, gladly, for they had begun to grudge her to needle and thread. Very early (for her) one morning my mother drove to Albemarle Street, and brought back a great blessing to our home. Without, as far as we knew, any regular arrangement, Annie Grant slid somehow into the charge of us. She took lessons with all our masters, was so attentive while with them, so diligent in working for them, so anxious to improve, that we caught her spirit. There was no more idling in our dining-room; when the prescribed lessons were over other occupations started up; she and I read history together daily, Goldsmith, Robertson, Rollin. We also had Shakespeare given to us, and some good novels, all Miss Edgeworth's Fashionable Tales; and we walked a great deal, sometimes taking the carriage to the Green Park or Kensington Gardens, and taking a turn there. We were really busy, and so happy, for Annie's gentle, steady rule was just what we all wanted; she soothed me, encouraged Jane, and coaxed Mary. Her great art was removing from us all that was irritating; we had no occasion to "set up our backs." We actually forgot to feel angry. Upon the phrenological system of influences, could we have been under better? Had she been carefully trained in physiological principles she could not have acted more wisely than her mere kindly nature prompted. In the matter of our breakfast she gained for us quite a victory, persuading my mother that now she had no cow in the stable weak

tea was cheaper than milk, and a small bit of butter good for the chest, so that we began our day so pleasantly all went smoothly on. In the evenings we reeled away for an hour to her spirited strathspeys, the big people often joining the little, and turning with us to magic music and other games before confined to our own more particular sphere. Everybody seemed happier since Annie lived with us. My spirits were at times quite flighty, nothing ever sobered them down to usefulness except the kind reproving glance of Annie Grant. She, however, failed with Mary; the stupidity of that strange heavy child had hitherto rendered every attempt to rouse her vain. She was eight years old, and she could not read, she would not try to count, writing she did on a slate in her own way, but not in the least in Mr Thompson's. She even romped listlessly, would not dance, liked sitting quiet with her doll cutting up cakes and apples into dinners for it. When she washed the old block of wood without arms or legs which she preferred to any wax baby, she seldom dried and never dressed it, but called to me to render these services; and if I were out of the way would roll a pinafore round the beauty and be content. She was tall, large, and fair, as big nearly as Jane, and looked as old. I was excessively fond of her; so was my mother.

My mother was very ill again this spring, confined for many weeks to her room, and then ordered off to the seaside as soon as she had recovered strength enough for the long journey to the coast. Those were not railroad days. To prepare her for her travels she took constant evening drives with us, getting out beyond Southwark, beyond the parks, towards Epping, etc., occasionally making a day of it to Kew, Richmond, and even Windsor. I had once been at Windsor before to see William, as I have, I think, mentioned, when we went to Eton Chapel, and afterwards met the King and Queen and the band of the Blues upon the Terrace. We did some of this again, went to the King's private chapel and saw him say his prayers

in his little bob wig, his short wife in a black silk cloak and plain straw bonnet beside him. We also this time saw the castle thoroughly, private apartments and all, for the Queen and the Princesses had gone for the day to Frogmore. My father's tenant at Thorley Hall was a Mr John Vowles, who had a brother William a cornfactor at Windsor; they were of German extraction, in some way connected with some of the personal attendants of the Queen. Mrs William Vowles, indeed, was a German born, and had been brought up by her parents in the Palace; she had been educated and portioned by Her Majesty, and had not been thrown off on her marriage. She it was who took us up the back-stairs and showed us through most of the rooms in common use by the family, when for the first time my mind wakened up to the fact that real kings and queens were not like the royalties of fairy tales, always seated upon thrones receiving homage and dispensing life and death, but quiet, simple, actively-industrious human beings. I could have made myself quite at home in Queen Charlotte's bedroom, and should have made myself very comfortable in the business-like morning-room occupied by herself and her daughters. Books, music, painting, works plain and fine, filled the apartment in which were but two easy-chairs, each with a small table beside it; these were for "Mr and Mrs Guelph," as they called themselves in the happy privacy of their family. Another time that we were at Windsor we dined early with Mr and Mrs Vowles, and went over to Frogmore in the evening—the Queen's hobby, her garden-house. It was a pretty villa in pretty grounds, too low for health, I should say, were people to have lived there, at least till the mere or pond was drained, but it did perfectly for the royal amusement by day. The walls of one room were painted by one Princess; all cabinets and tables of another were japanned by a second; carpets, stools, and rugs were the work of a third; while the knitting, knotting, and netting of the old Queen, if she did it all herself, must have ensured her a busy life.

By the middle of July my mother was able to be removed to Ramsgate, where she very soon recovered her looks and health; she was very fond of the sea, and throve near it. Mrs Peter Grant had taken a house for us on the East Cliff, a very fine situation with a splendid sea-view. We were at some distance from the town, a sort of common all round us, and one house only near; it was indeed attached to ours, the two stood together alone, out of the way of all the rest of Ramsgate. Our neighbour was Lady Augusta Murray, called by her friends the Duchess of Sussex, although her marriage to the Duke, which really did take place abroad, was null in this country. She had been created Baroness D'Ameland, and had a pension settled on her of £3000 a year, on which to bring up her two children, a boy and a girl, fine, large, handsome young people, unduly imbued with the grandeur of their birth. She never committed herself by calling herself or them by any title: "My boy, my girl," she always said in speaking of or to them. The servants, however, mentioned them as the Prince and Princess, as did all the acquaintances who visited at the house. Prince Augustus was about seventeen, extremely good-looking, though rather inclined to be stout; very good-natured he was too, amiable and devoted to his mother. He was going into the army under the name of D'Este, a bitter pill to the Duchess, although it was one of the royal surnames, and had been chosen for his son by the Duke himself. Princess Augusta was some years younger than her brother. She was but twelve, and particularly handsome on a large scale, a fine figure, and fine features, with a charming expression of countenance. The Duchess's house was small, though larger than ours, for she had turned the whole ground floor into one room, a library, and built a large dining-room out behind. The drawing-room floor was her own apartment, containing bedroom, sitting-room, and her maid's room; the floor above was equally divided between her son and daughter. She kept no horses, for she never drove out. She passed most of her time

in a very large garden, well walled in, which covered a couple of acres or more, and extended all down the slope of the cliff to the town. Our two families soon became intimate, the younger ones especially passing the greater part of the day together, a friendship which never entirely ceased while opportunity served to bring any of us together. The advances, however, were amusing. The Duchess, as a royal personage, must be waited on. My mother, who was very retiring, would not take such a step forward as the leaving her name at the great lady's door. My father, who had bowed, and been spoken to when gallantly opening gates, could do no more without his wife; so all came to a full stop. Meanwhile, Jane and I, who had made acquaintance out on the free common of the downs with the little Princess, untroubled by any notions of etiquette, enjoyed our intercourse with our new acquaintance amazingly; Jane and she soon becoming fast friends. One evening she approached the paling which separated our two gardens just as my mother was stepping over the gravel towards the carriage to take an airing. I shall never forget the picture; she leaned on the top rail, her large-leaved Tuscan hat thrown back off her dark close-cropped hair, and her fine countenance brightened by the blush of girlish modesty, while she held up a small basket full of fine peaches, an offering from her mother. A visit of thanks was of course necessary, and found agreeable. A few days after the Duchess bade Jane tell her mamma that she had returned her call when her mamma was unluckily out, and that she hoped they would be good neighbours. On this hint we all acted. My mother occasionally went in there with some of us, my father constantly, indeed he soon became her confidential adviser in many of her difficulties, trying to get her through some of the trials which harassed her existence. We were all made very happy by this addition to our Ramsgate pleasures; we liked the place itself and our life there, and above all we liked our neighbours.

We all breakfasted together, then studied for three hours, dined early with my father and mother, and drank tea with them late. In the intervals we were either next door, or on the downs, or on the sands. Annie and I used to take books down to the sands and sit on the rocks with them in our hands, but we never read; watching the waves, listening to them, looking at the crab-hunters and the shrimpers, and far out at sea straining our eyes after the shipping, little boats, larger craft, huge merchantmen, all moving over the face of the waters, and the downs in the distance—all this was book enough. Mary and Johnnie were often with us, and sometimes my mother, who, however, rather objected to such idling; and as Jane was almost always with the Princess, quite as great a favourite with the Duchess as with her daughter, a plan was struck out for the better employment of my time, which was immediately acted on. Mrs Peter Grant, the widow of one of my great-uncle Sandy's sons, who had had charge of Anne Grant of Glenmoriston, and lived in a small house at Ramsgate, had been found so competent to the task of superintending the education of young ladies, that she had been prevailed on by first one friend and then another to receive their delicate children. At last her family became too large for her small house. She took a larger one in Albion Place, engaged a clever governess, to whom she was shortly obliged to give an assistant, and had soon a flourishing school. She limited the number of pupils to eighteen, and generally had applications waiting for a vacancy.

To Mrs Peter Grant's school I was to be sent every day for so many hours, ostensibly to learn flower-painting, and be kept up in French and singing; but in reality to take down a good deal of conceit which unavoidably sprang up in the quick mind of a girl who had not the means of fairly testing her abilities by an equal standard. Jane was so much younger, and naturally so slow, her attempts in all our occupations were of course inferior to mine, and as we had no

companions except at play-hours, I could not find out that, clever as I thought myself, there were girls of my own age very much more advanced. This I learned very quickly at Albion Place, where three or four of my new friends were very much beyond me.

While at Ramsgate we were introduced to Colonel and Mrs Glossipp from Canterbury, he a fine soldierly-looking man, she a plain woman, but so nice, kind, gentle, merry, clever, quite a soldier's wife. She had four healthy, happy boys, and three gowns, a "heightem, a tighem, and a scrub," with which she perambulated the world, none of the wardrobe department likely to be hurt by her travels if we were to judge of the inferior degrees by a comparison with the "heightem," the one always exhibited at Ramsgate. But no matter what Mrs Glossipp wore she always looked like a lady, and she was so lively and agreeable it was always a white day when the Colonel's dog-cart drove up to the door of our small house on Albion Cliff. Mrs Glossipp was full of fun, and to please her a party was made, including the handsome Miss B., to attend a ball at Margate, at that time the summer retreat of all the city of London, and holding more wealth than any place out of it. Miss Louisa B. was quite wrong in carrying her pink cotton satin, though covered with muslin of her own embroidery, to such an assemblage as she found there. Lace dresses and lace flounces of fabulous value fluttered all round the room. Velvets and satins, feathers and jewels! such jewels as would have graced the Queen's drawing-room were in profusion. Large, fat, dowager *Aldermanesses*, with a fortune in Mechlin and diamonds on them, sat playing cards with tumblers of brandy and water beside them; the language used possessed a grammar of its own; the dancing was equally original, a Miss St George, the belle of the ball and six feet high, cutting capers up to the moon. The extravagances of this "fashionable" resort formed one of the sights to be seen from aristocratic Ramsgate. How different now! That race of civic dignitaries sleeps with its fathers. It would be hard to know the

tradesman from the noble now, at a glance at any rate. My father said the finery of the Margate ladies had excited my mother's envy, for she set about smuggling vigorously at this time, very much to his annoyance; bargain-making and smuggling were his aversion. He always said, "What is wanted get of the best quality at the best place, and take care of it. What is not wanted, don't get, however cheap; it is wasting money, in fact real extravagance; and have nothing to do with rogues." Wise preaching—'tis so easy for the man who lavishes thousands on *his* whistle, to lift his eyebrows at the cost of his wife's. My dear mother found it hard to resist those melodramatic sailors with their straw hats smartly bound with ribbon, the long curled love-lock then generally worn by the more dashing among the seamen, the rough, ready, obligingly awkward manner, and all their silks, laces, gloves, and other beautiful French goods so immeasurably superior to any in those days fabricated at home. She was not to be deterred by the seizures now and then made of all these treasures, miles and miles away; carriages stopped and emptied, ladies insulted, fined, and so on, as really frequently happened when their transactions were too daring. She could not resist a few purchases, though half believing my father's assertion that the smugglers were all in league with the Custom-house authorities, themselves giving information of any considerable purchaser. However, her doings were never thus brought to light.

Meanwhile, we young people had our occupations. The Duchess of Sussex, to amuse herself, got up the tragedy of Macbeth. She was a Scotchwoman, one of the Dunmore Murrays, and very national; she was, besides, intellectual and intelligent, as all her pursuits evidenced, and she was very proud of the beauty of her daughter. It was all to be amongst ourselves, we four, the little Princess, and two quiet little girls sometimes our companions, whose father lived in Ramsgate and was the Duchess's man of business. We all therefore "played many parts," which necessity we considered a

pleasure, as it kept us in one character or another continually on the stage. During the preparations we were incessantly rehearsing either at one house or the other, each, for the benefit of the rest, learning the whole play; thus impressing on our young memories, never to be effaced, some of the finest poetry in the language; the sentiments actually became endeared to us, wise trains of reflection following the pains of learning those favourite passages by heart. Jane was Macbeth and a second Roscius, my father, who had a good idea of acting, having been taught to read by Stephen Kemble, taking great pains with her. Lady Macbeth was ranted a little by the Princess, yet she looked the part well; I was a shocking stick in Banquo, but a first-rate witch, a capital Hecate. The Duchess painted one scene for us, which did for all—a bit of an old tower and some trees—and Deddy, as we called the elderly maid, Mrs Deadman, superintended the dresses. My father was the prompter, the library was the theatre, and a very respectable audience of dowager peeresses and other visitors and residents applauded every speech we made. The music-master played martial airs on an old wretched pianoforte between the acts, and there was a grand supper, followed by a good merry dance at the end, all having gone off well. Yet that crowning night was nothing near the enjoyment of all the busy hours we had preparing for it. "Dreamer, dream not the fruition," etc., as the wise of all ages have repeated, none of them in prettier lines than these, written by my father to the music of Rousseau's *Dream*, composed as he was walking round the *Ord Bain* many a day after this.

This was the year of the great comet; night after night we watched it rising over the town of Ramsgate, spreading its glorious train as it rose, and thus passing slowly on, the wonder of all, and terror of some, a grand sight only equalled by the Northern lights as we used to see them in the Highland winters. And this was the season of the return of the China fleet, single merchantmen not daring in those war times to venture

out to sea as in these happier, peaceful times. The East India shipping therefore made sail together under the convoy of a couple of frigates, an imposing evidence of the strength and wealth of the country, which had the most beautiful effect on the wide sea-view they entirely filled that ever could have been gazed at from any shore. The Downs, always beautiful because never deserted, and often very crowded, were on this occasion closely packed with huge Indiamen, their tall masts seeming to rake the skies; and when the anchors were weighed, and the dark mass moved out to sea, each vessel carrying all her canvas to catch the breeze, all distinctly seen from the balcony of our house, I do not think a grander sight ever met wondering eyes. The frigates, much smarter-looking ships, kept outside as convoy, and on they moved like some fine pageant in a scene, till, hours after we had seen them leave the roads at Deal, the last of the long line was lost to us behind the North Foreland, or the *South* I fancy it must have been as nearer to us, although it was the lesser projection of the two.

About the middle of November we returned to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and then Annie Grant and Jane and I set to work in earnest with all our old masters, and this winter really made good progress. As for Mary, there seemed to be no use in trying to teach her anything, for she would not learn, even to read; she was therefore, by the advice of old Dr Saunders, a friend of my grandfather Grant's, left to amuse herself as she liked with our baby brother Johnnie, and they were generally kept out in the Square all the fine hours of the day. This year our very handsome cousin, Ursula Launder, married William Norton, the natural son of Lord Grantley, a mere boy compared to her, for he was not more than two-and-twenty and she was at least twice his age. Her large fortune was her charm, but her young husband treated her with marked attention during her whole life, long after every vestige of her remarkable beauty had left her. Aunt Mary was one of the bridesmaids, Lord Dursley the groomsman, and

soon after came on the great Berkeley case, which was decided by stripping him of name and fame and giving that old title to a third brother. Uncle Frere was the solicitor employed to get up the case for the defendant, and so overworked was he by it, between fatigue and anxiety, that he took a fever before it was over, and frightened us all seriously. It was a brain fever, and in his delirium he kept calling for little Eli to sing him "Crochallan," so I was sent for, to sit by his bedside and "gently breathe" all the plaintive Scotch and Gaelic airs I could remember, thus soothing him when most excited. He would insist on sending messengers here, and there, and everywhere, on writing letters, and consulting on law points with me and the bedclothes, and he was never to be thwarted, but I was to sing the airs he liked best. At last one day he fell asleep to "Crochallan," the oft-repeated "*Hanouer ma vourgne*" having quite composed him. My aunt, who was always watching, sat down and wept. "Even children can be of use," she said as she kissed me, though I was no child, but very near fifteen; too old, my mother thought, to be again exhibited in *Macbeth*, which, having succeeded so well at Ramsgate, the Duchess was determined to get up again in Arklow Place.

Jane and I were very much with the Princess. Her mother's handsome house looking into the Park near Cumberland Gate was a very agreeable change to us, and we were so at home there we were quite at ease among the family circle. Jane was still the favourite. Prince Augustus was with his regiment in Jersey, from whence he had sent a box of little French curiosities to his mother; two of the toys were marked for Jane and me, so good-naturedly. Jane's was an ivory knife-grinder, mine a Frenchwoman in a high cap, spinning. It is at the Doune now. Instead of the Prince we had our friend Lord Archibald Hamilton, who spent most of his time with his cousin "*Augusta*," and *his* son Henry Hamilton, a fine boy then, though "accidental." Well, the play went on without me. I was only dresser and prompter. Lucy Drew replaced

me as Banquo, and Georgie Drew was Hecate; the other characters remained the same. Our scenery was borrowed from the theatre, our dresses were very superior, as was our orchestra, and our audience was half the peerage. Jane outdid herself, but William's Macduff outdid her Macbeth. We had waited for the Easter holidays in order to secure him. I remember that old Lady Dunmore, who had, like a Frenchwoman, taken to religion in her old age by way of expiating the sins of her youth, would not attend our play in public—her principles condemned the theatre—but she saw it in private. We all went to her small house in Baker Street dressed, and acted before her, and a capital good dinner she gave us afterwards, all her plate out, and lots of fruit. She must have been very beautiful in her day; quite a picture she was now, in a high cap like that in the prints of the Duchess of Argyle, the Irish beauty. Lord Dunmore was very nice, and his wife too—a Hamilton, a cousin; Fincastle and Charley Murray were charming boys. Many others there were, too, whom I forget. I just remember Lady Georgina Montague being there one day—a handsome, very dark, and very thin girl in a black frock, put on for the first time for her grandmother the Duchess of Gordon, whose funeral procession had that morning left London for the Highlands. My mother would hardly believe that the child could have been allowed to go out to spend a merry day with young companions at such a time, and attributed it to the ignorance of the governess who had charge of this poor deserted family. The Duke of Manchester was repairing his fortunes abroad as Governor of Jamaica; the Duchess had left home years before with one of her footmen. Both my father and mother grieved sincerely for the death of their old friend and neighbour with whom they had spent so many happy hours. Indeed, the whole of the Highlands mourned for her, as with all her oddities she was the soul of our Northern society.

The remaining events of this, our last season in London, come but hazily back to me. We acted our

Macbeth in Brunswick Square, I taking Lady Macbeth badly enough, I should think, on this mere family occasion. Duncan Macintosh, the Rothiemurchus forester, came to town on some of my father's law-suits, and was a perfect delight to everybody, with his shrewdness, his simplicity, his real astonishment, and the Highland idea of good breeding which precluded the expression of wonder at any novelty. Aunt Leitch, who was on a visit to us, seized on him as her beau, and treated him and herself to the play two or three times a week, for it was the last appearance of Mrs Siddons; she went through all her great parts, and took her leave of the stage as Lady Macbeth.

Uncle Ralph ventured to Covent Garden that night; he did get in, but came out again, returning to us nearly exhausted, his hat crushed, his coat torn, his face so pale that he frightened us. Never had there been such a crush at the doors of the pit; it had so overcome even his strength, that he was unable to endure the heat of the closely-packed house. We heard next day that the audience would listen to no other performer. When she was on the stage a pin could have been heard to fall; when she was off, all was uproar, Kemble himself even unattended to, and when she walked away at the last from her doctor and the waiting gentlewoman, they would bear no more; all rose, waving hats and handkerchiefs, shouting, applauding, making such a din as might have brought the house down. All passionless as was that great actress's nature in private life, she was overcome. Uncle Ralph ever regretted being unable to remain to see the last of fine acting. She has had no successor. I am quite sure that we, we young people I mean, owed more to Covent Garden than to any other of our teachers. We not only learned Shakespeare by heart, thus filling our heads with wisdom, our fancy with the most lovely imagery, and warming our hearts from that rich store of good, but we fixed, as it were, all these impressions; John Kemble and Mrs Siddons embodying all great qualities, becoming to us the images of the qualities we admired.

An excuse this for the statues and pictures in the churches of *infant* times.

In May or June poor Mr Perceval was shot, our neighbour in the Square, whose three daughters, disdaining other associates, walked only with the three Miss Nicholls, Sir John Nicholls' equally exclusive young ladies. Lady Wilson ran in to tell my mother, she having just had an express from Sir Griffin, who was in Westminster Hall. It was a great shock to every one, though he had been an unpopular man; the suddenness of the blow and the insufficiency of the cause making the deed the more afflicting. It set all the politicians to work again, but nothing came of all the commotion. The Prince Regent went on with the same Tory party amongst whom he had thrown himself as soon as he became head of the Government. One place was easily supplied; his former friends were just as far from power as before. They might and did abuse him, and the *man* deserved abuse, whatever the Regent did. Moore enchanted the town with his witty newspaper squibs, looked for as regularly every morning as breakfast was. Whigs blamed and Tories could not praise, but they all ate their leek thankfully, and on went the world with its generalities and individualities, its Buonaparte and its Wellington, "the most profligate Ministry that ever existed," holding the whip-hand over at least an equally profligate Opposition. Whatever sins were going on we three little girls had worn mourning for all. While we were at Ramsgate the old king's delirium had become so alarmingly violent it was supposed his bodily strength must give way under the continual paroxysms; his death was therefore daily expected, so my careful mother, fearing that black would rise in price, bought up at a sale a quantity of bombazine. The king calmed, recovered his strength, but his mind was hopelessly gone, in which state properly attended to he might live for years. What was to be done with all the bombazine? We just had to wear it, and trimmed plentifully with crimson it did very well.

But now a great change was to come over the family. The English bar had never answered well, and was now to be given up. It remained to be seen how Parliamentary business would answer, for my father was elected member for the thoroughly rotten borough of Great Grimsby, at an expense he and the electors, and his agent little Sandy Grant, were not one of them fully able to acknowledge; to meet some of the difficulties thus produced, economical measures were to be resorted to, which in a couple of years would set everything to rights. Thorley Hall had been sold some time before to Lord Ellenborough, and Kinloss bought with part of the purchase money. The house in Lincoln's Inn Fields was to go now and all the furniture not wanted to make the Doune more comfortable, for, to our delight, it was there we were to spend these two years of retirement. My father was to run up to town for the session at a very trifling expense. We were a little disturbed at the news that Annie was not to go North with us. My mother hoped that before the winter she would settle herself in some house of business, but in the meantime she was to pay a visit to a Mrs Drury, a rich widow, the sister of Mr William Hunter, who had been married to one of the Malings, and who had taken a great fancy to our dear Annie. Next came worse tidings. We were to have a governess; and very great pains our poor mother took to choose one. I could not count the numbers she saw, the notes she wrote, the references she visited; at last she fixed upon a little bundle of a woman recommended by Lady Glenbervie. It all seemed satisfactory; a high salary bribed Miss Elphick to engage for one year to go to so remote a country, and she came every other day to sit with us from the time she gave her consent to the bargain, that she might learn our ways and we get accustomed to her. My father also engaged a little French girl, a protégé of M. Beckvelt and about Jane's age, to go North as our schoolroom companion. We were in great grief when we said farewell in Brunswick Square. All the pretty presents waiting for us there

could not pacify either Jane or me. To me my aunt Lissy was inexpressibly dear, and the little cousins, of whom there were then four, John, Lissy, George, and Susan, were great pets with us. It required to have Rothiemurchus in prospect.

CHAPTER IX

1812

EARLY in July of the year 1812 my mother set out with her children for the Doune, bidding a final adieu, though she knew it not, to England. I cannot remember whether my father travelled with us or not. Yes, he must—for he read Childe Harold to us ; it had just come out, and made its way by its own intrinsic merit, for popular prejudice set strong against the author. “To sit on rocks,” etc., arrested the attention even of me. I was not given to poetry generally ; then, as now, it required “thoughts that rouse, and words that burn” to affect me with aught but weariness ; but when, after a second reading of this passage, my father closed the pamphlet for a moment, saying, “*This is poetry !*” I felt that he was right, and resolved to look the whole poem over some day at leisure. We had also with us Walter Scott’s three first poems, great favourites with us, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, *Goldsmith’s History of England*, and his *Animated Nature*, and in French, *Adèle et Théodore*. This was our travelling library, all tumbled into a brown holland bag kept under the front seat of the barouche. At the inns where we had long rests, our own horses doing but few stages in the day, we amused ourselves in spouting from these volumes, Jane and I acting *Macbeth*, singing operas of our own invention, and playing backgammon, a style of thing so repugnant to the school ideas of propriety befitting the reign of the new governess, that she got wonderfully grave with her unfortunate pupils.

We had picked her up as we left town, and thinking more of ourselves than of her felt quite disposed to quarrel with any one who wept so bitterly at leaving London and her own friends, when she was going to the Highlands amongst ours. She was a little fat dumpling of a woman, with fine eyes, and a sweet-toned voice in speaking, strangely dressed in a fashion peculiar to the middle classes in England in that day, when the modes were not studied all through society as they are now, nor indeed attainable by moderate persons, as the expense was quite beyond the means of poorer people. Her provision for the long journey was a paper of cakes, and a large thick pocket-handkerchief, which was soon wetted through; not an auspicious beginning where two such monkeys as Jane and I were concerned. Mary and Johnnie ate the cakes. Poor Miss Elphick! she had troubled times. Her first grand stand was against the backgammon, "shaking dice-boxes in a public inn!" We were very polite, but we would not give in, assuring her we were always accustomed to shake dice-boxes where we liked out of lesson hours. Next she entreated to be spared Macbeth's dagger! Hamlet's soliloquies! Hecate's fury! "So masculine to be strutting about and ranting in such loud tones," etc. etc. We were amazed; our occupation gone! the labour of months to be despised after all the applause we had been earning! What were we to do? sit silent with our hands before us? Not we indeed! We pitied her, and left her, thinking that our mother had made a most unfortunate choice in a governess.

We entered Scotland by the Kelso Road, we passed the field of Flodden; neither of us remembered why it should be famous. "Miss Elphick will tell us, I am sure," I remarked; pert unfeeling child that I was. I had taken her measure at once, and knew full well she knew less of Flodden field than I did. "Decidedly not," said my father, "take the trouble to hunt out all the necessary information for yourself, you will be less likely to forget it; I shall expect the whole history a week after we get home." Whether suspecting the

truth, he had come to the rescue of the governess, or that he was merely carrying out his general plan of making us do all our work ourselves, I cannot say, and I did not stop to think. My head had begun to arrange its ideas. The Flowers o' the Forest and Marmion were running through it. "Ah, papa," I said, "I need not hunt, it's all here now, the phantom, the English lady, the spiked girdle and all; I'm right, ain't I?" and I looked archly over at our governess, who, poor woman, seemed in the moon altogether. The family conversation was an unknown language to her. "What *could* have made mamma choose her?" said Jane to me.

We went to see Melrose, dined at Jedburgh, passed Cowdenknowes, Tweedside, Ettrick Shaws, Gala Water, starting up in the carriage in ecstasies, flinging ourselves half out at the sides each time these familiar names excited us. In vain Miss Elphick pulled our frocks. I am sure she feared she had undertaken the charge of lunatics, particularly when I burst forth in song at either Tweedside or Yarrow braes. It was not so much the scenery, it was the "classic ground" of all the Border country.

A number of French prisoners, officers, were on parole at Jedburgh. Lord Buchan, whom we met there, took us to see a painting in progress by one of them; some battlefield, all the figures portraits from memory. The picture was already sold, and part paid for, and another ordered, which we were all very glad of, the handsome young painter having interested us much. The ingenuity of the French prisoners of all ranks was amazing, only to be equalled by their industry; those of them unskilled in higher arts earned for themselves most comfortable additions to their allowance by turning bits of wood, bones, straw, almost anything in fact, into neat toys of many sorts, eagerly bought up by all who met with them. We rested a few days in Edinburgh and then journeyed leisurely by the Highland road home, still crossing the Queensferry in a miserable sailing boat, and the Tay at Inver

for the last time in the large flat boat. When next we passed our boundary river the handsome bridge was built over it at Dunkeld, the little inn was done up, a fine hotel where the civillest of landlords reigned, close to the bridge, received all travellers; and Neil Gow was dead, the last of our bards—no one again will ever play the Scotch music as he did. His sons in the quick measures were perhaps his equals, they gave force and spirit and fine execution to strathspeys and reels, but they never gave the slow, the tender, airs with the real feeling of their beauty their father had. Nor can any one now hope to revive a style passing away. A few true fingers linger amongst us, but this generation will see the last of them. Our children will not be as national as their parents—reflections made like some puns, *à loisir*, for at the time we last ferried over the Tay I was only on the look-out for all the well-remembered features of the scenery. We baited the horses at Moulinearn, not the pretty country inn of the rural village which peeps out on the Tummel from its screen of fine wooding now, but a dreary, desolate, solitary stone house, dirt without and smoke within, and little to be had in it but whisky. The road to Blair then passed over the summit of the hills, over-looking the river and the valley in which nestled Fascally, and allowing of a peep at Loch Rannoch in the far distance; then on through Killiecrankie, beautiful then as now, more beautiful, for no Perth traders had built villas on its sheltered banks, nor Glasgow merchant perched a castle on the rock. Hardly a cabin broke the solitude in those days, to interrupt the awe we always felt on passing the stone set up where Dundee fell, Bonny Dundee, whom we Highlanders love still in spite of Walter Scott. Miss Elphick, poor soul, was undoubtedly as innocent of any acquaintance with him as she had been with James IV., but there had been something in my father's manner on the Flodden field day which prevented any further display of my ill-breeding. I therefore contented myself with a verse of the song, and a little conversation with my mother, who

was a perfect chronological table of every event in modern history.

The old inn at Blair was high up on the hill, overlooking the Park, the wall of which was just opposite the windows. We used to watch through the trunks of the trees for the antlered herds of deer, and walk to a point from whence we could see the Castle far down below, beside the river, a large, plain, very ugly building now, that very likely looked grander before its battlements were levelled by order of the Government after the rebellion. Here we were accustomed to a particularly good pudding, a regular soufflé that would have done no discredit to a first-rate French cook, only that he would have been amazed at the quantity of whisky poured over it. The German brandy puddings must be of the same genus, improved, perhaps, by the burning. The "Athole lad" who waited on us was very awkward, red-haired, freckled, in a faded, nearly threadbare tartan jacket. My father and mother had a bedroom, Johnnie and the maid a closet, but we three and our governess slept in the parlour, two in a bed, and the beds were in the wall shut in by panels, and very musty was the smell of them. So poor Miss Elphick cried, which we extremely resented as a reflection on the habits of our country. Next day was worse, a few miles of beauty, and then the dreary moor to Dalnacardoch, another lone house with very miserable steading about it, and a stone-walled sheepfold near the road; and then the high hill-pass to Dalwhinnie very nearly as desolate. Nothing can exceed the dreariness of Drumochter—all heather, bog, granite, and the stony beds of winter torrents, unrelieved by one single beauty of scenery, if we except a treeless lake with a shooting-box beside it, and three or four fields near the little burn close to which stands the good inn of Dalwhinnie. We felt so near home there that we liked the lonely place, and were almost sorry we were to sleep at Pitmain, the last stage on our long journey. We never see such inns now; no carpets on the floors, no cushions in the chairs, no curtains to the

windows. Of course polished tables, or even clean ones, were unknown. All the accessories of the dinner were wretched, but the dinner itself, I remember, was excellent; hotch-potch, salmon, fine mutton, grouse, scanty vegetables, bad bread, but good wine. A mile on from Pitmain were the indications of a village—the present town of Kingussie—a few very untidy-looking slated stone houses each side of a road, the bare heather on each side of the Spey, the bare mountains on each side of the heather, a few white-walled houses here and there, a good many black turf huts, frightful without, though warm and comfortable within. A little farther on rose Belleville, a great hospital-looking place protruding from young plantations, and staring down on the rugged meadow-land now so fine a farm. The birch woods began to show a little after this, but deserted the banks about that frightful Kincaig where began the long moor over which we were glad to look across the Spey to Invereshie, from whence all the Rothiemurchus side of the river was a succession of lovely scenery. On we went over the weary moor of Alvie to the loch of the same name with its kirk and manse, so singularly built on a long promontory, running far out into the water; Tor Alvie on the right, Craigellachie before us, and our own most beautiful “plain of the fir trees” opening out as we advanced, the house of the Doune appearing for a moment as we passed on by Lynwilg. We had as usual to go on to the big boat at Inverdrurie, feasting our eyes all the way on the fine range of the Cairngorm, the pass of the Larrig between Cairngorm and Brae-Riach, the hill of Kincairn standing forward to the north to enclose the forest which spread all along by the banks of the Spey, the foreground relieved by hillocks clothed with birch, fields, streams, and the smoke from the numerous cottages. Our beloved Ord Bain rose right in front with its bald head and birch-covered sides, and we could point out our favourite spots to one another as we passed along, some coming into sight as others receded, till the clamour of our young voices, at first amusing,

had to be hushed. We were so happy ! we were at last come home ; London was given up, and in our dearly loved Rothiemurchus we now fully believed we were to live and die.

We found the Doune all changed again, more of the backwater, more of the hill, and all the garden gone. This last had been removed to its present situation in the series of pretty hollows in the birch wood between the Drum and the Milltown muir ; a fashion of the day, to remove the fruit and vegetables to an inconvenient distance from the cook, the kitchen department of the garden being considered the reverse of ornamental. The new situation of ours, and the way it was laid out, was the admiration of everybody, and there could not well have been anything of the sort more striking to the eye, with the nicely-managed entrance among the trees, and the gardener's cottage so picturesquely placed ; but I always regretted the removal. I like to be able to lounge in among the cabbages, to say nothing of the gooseberries ; and a walk of a quarter of a mile on a hot summer's day before reaching the refreshment of fruit is almost as tormenting to the drawing-room division of the family as is the sudden want of a bit of thyme, mint, or parsley to those in authority in the offices, with no one beyond the swing-door idle enough to have half an hour to spare for fetching some. A very enjoyable shrubbery replaced the dear old formal kitchen garden, with belts of flowering trees, and gay beds of flowers, grass plots, dry walks, and the Doune Hill in the midst of it, all neatly fenced from the lawn ; and so agreeable a retirement was this piece of ornamental ground, that I can't but think it very bad taste in my brother John and the Duchess of Bedford to take away the light green paling and half the dressed ground, and throw so large an open space about that ugly half-finished house : for I am writing now after having been with my husband and my children and three of my nephews in the Highlands, a few really happy weeks at Inverdrue ; finding changes enough in our Duchus, as was to be

expected after an absence of twenty years; much to regret, some things to praise, and many more to wish for. In my older age it was the condition of the people that particularly engaged me; in 1812 it was the scenery.

It has always seemed to me that this removal to Rothiemurchus was the first great era in my life. All our habits changed—all connections, all surroundings. We had been so long in England, we elder children, that we had to learn our Highland life again. The language, the ways, the style of the house, the visitors, the interests, all were so entirely different from what had been latterly affecting us, we seemed to be starting as it were afresh. I look back on it even now as a point to date up to and on from; the beginning of a second stage in the journey. Our family then consisted of my father and mother, we three girls and our governess, and our young French companion Caroline Favrin, William during the summer holidays, Johnnie, and a maid between him and my mother, poor Peggy Davidson. Besides her there were the following servants: Mrs Bird the coachman's wife, an English-woman, as upper housemaid and plain needlewoman; under her Betty Ross, the gardener's youngest daughter; Grace Grant, the beauty of the country, only daughter of Sandy Grant the *greusiach* or shoemaker, our schoolroom maid; old Belle Macpherson, a soldier's widow who had followed the 92nd all over the world, and had learned to make up the Marquis of Huntly's shirts remarkably well at Gibraltar, box-plaiting all the frills—he never wore them small-plaited, though my father did for many a long day after this! She was the laundrymaid. The cook and housekeeper was an English Mrs Carr from Cumberland, an excellent manager; a plain cook under her from Inverness; and old Christie as kitchenmaid. The men were Simon Ross, the gardener's eldest son, as butler, and an impudent English footman, Richard, with a bottle-nose, who yet turned all the women's heads; William Bird the coachman, and George Ross, another son of the

gardener's, as groom. Old John Mackintosh brought in all the wood and peats for the fires, pumped the water, turned the mangle, lighted the oven, brewed the beer, bottled the whisky, kept the yard tidy, and stood enraptured listening to us playing on the harp "like Daavid"! There was generally also a clerk of Mr Cooper's, my father requiring assistance in his study, where he spent the greater part of his time managing all his perplexed affairs.

At the farm were the grieve, and as many lads as he required for the work of the farm under him, who all slept in a loft over the stables, and ate in the farm kitchen. Old George Ross No. 1—not the gardener—had a house and shop in the offices; he was turner, joiner, butcher, weaver, lint-dresser, wool-comber, dyer, and what not; his old wife was the henwife, and had her task of so many hanks of wool to spin in the winter. Old Jenny Cameron, who had never been young, and was known as Jenny Dairy, was supreme in the farm kitchen; she managed cows, calves, milk, stores, and the spinning, assisted by an active girl whom I never recollect seeing do anything but bake the oaten bread over the fire, and scour the wooden vessels used for every purpose, except on the washing and rinsing days (called by the maids *ranging*), when Jenny gave help in the laundry, in which abode of mirth and fun the under-housemaid spent her afternoons. Besides this regular staff, John Fyffe, the handsome smith, came twice a week to the forge with his apprentices, when all the maids were sure to require repairs in the ironworks; and the *greusiach* came once a week for the check he carried in his bosom to the bank at Inverness, walking the thirty-six miles as another man, not a Highlander, would go three, and the thirty-six back again, with the money in the same safe hiding-place. My father at this time paid most of the wages in cash. There were also the bowman, who had charge of the cattle, named, I suppose, from the necessity of arming him in ancient times with the weapon most used, when he had to guard his herd from marauders. John Macgregor was

our bowman's name, though he was never spoken of but as John Bain or John the Fair, on account of his complexion. He was married to George Ross the orraman's daughter (orraman means the jobber or Jack-of-all-trades), and, like almost all the rest of them, lived with us till he died. The gardener, and those of his family who were not married or in our service, lived in the pretty cottage at one entrance of the new garden, which also served as lodge to the White Gate. The game-keeper, tall, handsome John Macpherson, had an ugly little hut at the Polchar. The fox-hunter, little, active Lewie Gordon, had part of the Kinapol house; the principal shepherd, John Macgregor, known as the muckle shepherd from his great stature, had the remainder; the under-shepherd, also a Macgregor, lived nearer the mountains. The carpenter, Donald Maclean, had another part of Kinapol; he had married my mother's first cook, Nelly Grant, she who could make so many puddings, ninety-nine, if I remember right. The Colleys, the masons, were at Riannachan; far enough apart all of them, miles between any two, but it little mattered; we were slow coaches in our Highlands; time was of little value, space of no account, an errand was a day's work, whether it took the day or only an hour or two. Three or four extra *aids*, Tam Mathieson the carrier, Tam M'Tavish the smuggler, and Mary Loosach and the Nairn fisherwives, with their creels on their backs, made up the complement of our Highland servitors.

Poor Miss Elphick! nothing could reconcile her at first to the wild country she had got into. Between the inns and bleak moors and the Gaelic she had been overpowered, and had hardly articulated since we crossed Drumochter. She had yet to awake to the interest of the situation, to accommodate herself besides to manners so entirely different from any she had been accustomed to. How our mother could have taken a fancy to this strange little woman was ever an enigma to Jane and me; she was uneducated, had lived amongst a low set of people, and had not any notion

of the grave business she had undertaken. Her temper was passionate and irritable; we had to humour, to manage her, instead of learning from her to discipline ourselves. Yet she was clever, very warm-hearted, and she improved herself wonderfully after being with us a little time. Her father, of German extraction, had been bailiff to the Duke of Clarence at Bushley Park; he lived jollily with a set of persons of his own station, spending freely what was earned easily, and so leaving nothing behind him. His son succeeded him in his place; his elder daughters were married poorly; this one, the youngest, had nothing for it but the usual resource of her class, go out as a governess, for which responsible situation she had never been in the least prepared. Her childhood had been chiefly passed under Mrs Jordan's eye, among all her Fitz-Clarences; she then went to a third-rate school, and at eighteen went to keep her rather dissipated brother's house during the interval between his first and second marriage. We got on better with her after a while, but at first her constant companionship made us very miserable. Oh, how we regretted Annie Grant!

It was the intention of my father and mother to remain quietly at the Doune for the next two years, that is, my father intended the Doune to be the home of his wife and children. He could himself be with us only occasionally, as he had to carry his election, and then in the proper season take his place in Parliament. I cannot bring to mind whether he wrote M.P. after his name this year or the next, but in either the one or the other Great Grimsby was gained—at what cost the ruin of a family could certify. Whether he were with us or no, visitors poured in as usual; no one then ever passed a friend's house in the Highlands, nor was it ever thought necessary to send invitations on the one part, or to give information on the other; the doors were open literally, for ours had neither lock nor bolt, and people came in sure of a hearty welcome and good cheer. The Lady Logie I remember well; I was

always fond of her, she was so fond of me; and her old father, and her sister Grace Baillie, whom I overheard one morning excusing my plain appearance to my mother—"pale and thin certainly, but very lady-like, which is always sufficient." No Mr Macklin with his flute—he was in India, gone as a barrister to Bombay, and recommended to the good graces of my uncle Edward. Burgie and Mrs Dunbar Brodie paid their regular visit. She measured all the rooms, and he played the flageolet in the boat upon the lake not badly, though we young people preferred hearing Mrs Bird, the coachman's wife, sing the "Battle of the Nile" in that situation. Then we had poor Sir Alexander Boswell, not a baronet then, Bozzy's son, his wife, wife's sister and quiet husband, Mr Conyngham—new acquaintances made through the Dick Lauders, who lived near them; they were also with us, and all the old set. Amongst others, Sir William Gordon-Cumming, newly come to his title and just of age; some of his sisters with him. He was the queerest creature, ugly, yet one liked his looks, tall and well made, and awkward more from oddity than ungracefulness; extraordinary in his conversation between cleverness and a kind of want of it. Everybody liked Sir Willie, and many years afterwards he told me that at this time he very much liked me, and wanted my father to promise me to him in a year or two; but my father would make no promises, only just a warm welcome on the old footing when this oddity should return from his continental travels. He was just setting out on them, and I never heard of this early conquest of mine, for he fell in love with Elizabeth Campbell at Florence; "And ye see, Lizzy, my dear," said he to me, as he was driving me in his buggy round the beautiful grounds at Altyre, "Eliza Campbell put Eliza Grant quite out of my head!" We had no Kinrara; that little paradise had been shut up ever since the death of the Duchess of Gordon, except just during a month in the shooting season, when the Marquis of Huntly came there with a bachelor party.

We girls saw little of all this company, old friends as some of them were, as, except at breakfast where Miss Elphick and I always appeared, we never now left our own premises. We found this schoolroom life very irksome at first, it was so different from what we had been accustomed to. Governess and pupils slept in one large room up at the top of the new part of the house, the barrack-room where I so well remembered Edwina Cumming combing her long yellow hair. We had each of us a little white-curtained bed, made to fit into the slope of the roof in its own corner, leaving space enough between the bedstead and the end wall for the washing-table. The middle of the room with its window, fireplace, toilettes, and book table, made our common dressing-room; there were chests of drawers each side of the fireplace, and a large closet in the passage, so that we were comfortably lodged. Miss Elphick began her course of instruction by jumping out of bed at six o'clock in the morning, and throwing on her clothes with the haste of one escaping from a house on fire; she then wiped her face and hands, and smoothed her cropped hair, and her toilet was over. Some woman, I forget who, telling Sir William Cumming, who was seated next her at breakfast, that she never took more than ten minutes to dress in the morning, he instantly got up, plate and cup in hand, and moved off to the other side of the table. He would not then have sat beside me, for Miss Elphick considered ten minutes quite sufficient for any young lady to give to her toilet upon week-days. We could "clean ourselves" properly, as she did, upon Sundays. She could not allow us time for such unnecessary dawdling. We must have an hour of the harp or the pianoforte before breakfast, and our papa chose that we should be out another; therefore, we must give ourselves a "good wash" on Sundays, and make that do for the week. We were thoroughly disgusted. Her acquirements were on a par with this style of breeding; she and I had a furious battle the first week we began business, because during a history

lesson she informed dear Mary that Scotland had been conquered by Queen Elizabeth, and left by her with her other possessions to her nephew, King James! I was pert enough, I daresay, for the education we had received had given us an extreme contempt for such ignorance, but what girl of fifteen, brought up as I had been, could be expected to show respect for an illiterate woman of very ungovernable temper, whose ideas had been gathered from a class lower than we could possibly have been acquainted with, and whose habits were those of a servant? She insisted also that there never had been a Caliph Haroun al Raschid—our most particular friend—that he was only a fictitious character in those Eastern fairy tales; and when, to prove his existence, we brought forward the list of his presents to Charlemagne, we found she did not believe in him either! Yet she could run off a string of dates like *Isabella in The Good French Governess*. I thought of her historical knowledge a good many years afterwards, when visiting General Need's nephew, Tom Walker, at Aston Hall, in Derbyshire; we had known him very well in Edinburgh when he was in the Scots Greys. He was public-school and college bred, had been a dozen years in the army, was married to a marquis's grand-daughter, and had a fortune of £3000 a year. He was showing us a collection of coins, some of them of the reign of Elizabeth, and after calling our attention to them, he produced some base money which she had coined on some emergency—in plain terms, to cheat the public. "And here, you see," added he, picking up several other base pieces, "Philip and Mary, following her bad example, cheated the public too."

It was not to be supposed that we could get on very comfortably with poor Miss Elphick; we were ungovernable, I daresay, but she was totally unfit to direct us; and then, when we saw from the windows of our schoolroom, a perfect prison to us, the fine summer pass away, sun shining, birds singing, river flowing, all in vain for us; when we heard the drawing-room party setting out for all our favourite haunts, and felt our-

selves denied our ancient privilege of accompanying it, we, who had hitherto roamed really "fancy free," no wonder we rebelled at being thus cooped up, and detested the unfortunate governess who thus deprived us of liberty. Miss Elphick determined to leave; she felt herself quite unequal to the Highlands and the Highland children, so she went to make her complaint to my mother. She returned after a long conference, seemingly little improved in temper by the interview. However she had fared, we fared worse; she was, to all appearance, civilly treated, which we were not. I was first sent for, and well reproofed, but not allowed to speak one word to excuse myself; called impudent, ignorant, indolent, impertinent, deprived of all indulgences, threatened with still heavier displeasure, and sent back to my duties in such a state of wrath that I was more decided than ever on resisting the governess, and only regretted my powers of annoyance could not be brought to bear also on my mother. Jane then had her maternal lecture, which gave her a fit of tears, so bitter that she had to be sent to bed; she was silent as to what had passed, but she was more grieved than I was. My father had been from home during this commotion, but I suppose he was informed on his return of what had taken place, for an entire reform in every way was the result of this "agitation." Until he came back we were miserable enough; Miss Elphick never spoke to Jane or me, threw our books, pens, and pencils at us, contradicted our every wish, to make us know, she said, that she was *over* us. She doubled our lessons, curtailed our walks, and behaved altogether with vulgarity. My mother soon forgave Jane; I, who was never a favourite, was rather unjustly kept out of favour—not an improving treatment of a naturally passionate temper.

My father met us with his usual affection, but next day his manner was so stiffly dignified we were prepared for a summons to attend him in the study. I was first ordered to appear. I had determined with Jane to tell my father boldly all our grievances, to

expose to him the unsuitability of our governess, and to represent to him that it could not be expected we would learn from a person whom we felt ourselves fitted to teach. Alas, for my high resolves! There was something so imposing about my father when he sat in judgment that awe generally overcame all who were presented to him. Remonstrances besides would have been useless, as he addressed me very differently from what I expected as I stood before him, all my courage gone, just waiting my doom in silence. I forget the exact words of his long harangue; he was never very brief in his speeches, but the purport is in my head now, for he told me what I knew was the truth. He said Miss Elphick was not exactly the sort of governess he could have wished for us, but that she was in many respects the best out of many my mother had taken the trouble to inquire about. She had great natural talents, habits of neatness, order, and industry, in all of which we were deficient; all these she could teach us, with many other equally useful things. A more correct knowledge of history, a more cultivated mind, would have been a great advantage certainly, but we could not expect everything; what he did expect, however, was that his children should act as became the children of a gentleman, the descendants of a long line of gentlemen, and not by rude unfeeling remarks, impertinence, and insubordination put themselves on a par with their inferiors. Gentlemen and gentlewomen were studious of the feelings of all around them; they were characterised by that perfect good-breeding which would avoid inflicting the slightest annoyance on any human being.

This lecture had considerable effect on me. I dreaded compromising my gentle blood; I also believed in the difficulty of procuring a suitable governess. My conduct therefore improved in politeness, but I cannot say that I ever learned to esteem poor Miss Elphick. Jane's private interview with my father did not last so long as mine; she had never been so pert nor so intractable as I had been, therefore she had less to

reform. She said my father had quite failed to convince her that they had got a suitable governess for us, she was therefore sure that he had some doubts on the point himself; but as there seemed a determination not to part with her we had to make the best of it; and from this time Miss Elphick and Jane got on very well together; I think, at last, Jane really liked her. She improved wonderfully. *Her* conversation in the study lasted an hour or more, and she left it much more humble than she had entered it. What passed never transpired, but her manner became less imperious, her assertions less dogmatic. Dictionaries, biographies, gazetteers, chronologies were added to our bookcase, and these were always referred to afterwards in any uncertainty, though it was done by way of giving us the trouble of searching in order to remember better.

Schoolroom affairs went on more smoothly after this settlement. We were certainly kept very regularly at work, and our work was sufficiently varied, but the heads were properly rested for the most part, and we had battled out a fair amount of exercise.

In the summer we rose at six, practised an hour, walked an hour, and then the younger ones had breakfast, a plan Dr Combe would have changed with advantage. Miss Elphick and I had often to wait two hours longer before our morning's meal was tasted, for we joined the party in the eating-room, and my father and mother were very late in appearing. We each took a bit of bread before the early walk, a walk that tired me greatly. Studies went on till twelve, when we went out again. At two we dined, and had half an hour to ourselves afterwards. We studied again till five, and spent the rest of the evening as we liked, out of doors till dark in summer, or in the drawing-room, for we had "agitated" to get rid of learning lessons overnight and had succeeded. In winter we rose half an hour later, without candle, or fire, or warm water. Our clothes were all laid on a chair overnight in readiness for being taken up in proper order next morning. My mother would not give us candles, and Miss Elphick insisted on

our getting up. We were not allowed hot water, and really in the Highland winters, when the breath froze on the sheets, and the water in the jugs became cakes of ice, washing was a very cruel necessity. As we could play our scales in the dark, the two pianofortes and the harp began the day's work. How very near crying was the one whose turn set her at the harp I will not speak of; the strings cut the poor cold fingers. Martyr the first sat in the dining-room at the harp, martyr the second put her poor blue fingers to the keys of the grand pianoforte in the drawing-room, for in these two rooms the fires were never lighted till near nine o'clock. Mary was better off. She being a beginner practised under Miss Elphick's superintendence in the schoolroom, where, if Grace Grant had not a good fire burning brightly by seven o'clock, she was likely to hear of it. Our *al fresco* playing below was not of much use to us; we had better have been warm in our beds for all the good it did us. As we had no early walk in winter, we went out at half after eleven, and at five we had a good romp all over the old part of the house, playing at hide-and-seek in the long garret and its many dependencies, till it was time for Miss Elphick, who dined in the parlour, to dress. We had a charming hour to ourselves then by the good fire in the schoolroom, no candle allowed, till we had to dress ourselves and take our work down to the drawing-room, where I had tea; the rest had supped upstairs on bread, Johnnie and Caroline Favrin alone being able to take the milk. Poor, dear Jane, how I longed to give her one of the cups of tea I was allowed myself; she was too honest to go into the nursery and get one from Peggy Davidson.

We really soon got to like the regularity of our life. Once accustomed to the discipline we hardly felt it as such, and we got very much interested in most of our employments, anxious to show our father that we were making good use of our time. We generally played to him in the evening whether there were guests or no, and once a week we had each to give him something new, on the execution of which he passed judgment, not unspar-

ingly, for he was particular to a fault in finding fault. Once a week we had a French evening when there was no company, and we read aloud occasionally after tea, in turns, such bits as he had himself selected for us out of good authors, the same passage over and over till we had acquired the proper expression. He often read aloud himself any passage that struck him, either from books, reviews, or newspapers. We had a good command of books, a fair library of our own, and a really good one collected by my father. My father always commented on the passages selected, ever in a spirit of liberality and kindness; I never heard an ill-natured remark from his lips, on either dead or living, nor noticed the very slightest interest in gossip of any sort; he meddled in no man's business, was charitable, in St Paul's sense of the word, in all his judgments. It was no common privilege to grow up under such a mind.

My mother, when in health, was an example of industry. She kept a clean and tidy house, and an excellent table, not doing much herself, but taking care to see all well done. She was very kind to the poor, and encouraged us to visit them and work for them, and attend to them when sick. She was a beautiful needlewoman, and taught us to sew and cut out, and repair all our own, our father's, brothers', and family linen. She had become Highland wife enough to have her spinnings and dyeings, and weavings of wool and yarn, and flax and hanks, and she busied herself at this time in all the stirring economy of a household "remote from cities," and consequently forced to provide its own necessities. Her evening readings were her relaxation; she was very well read, thoroughly read in English classics, and she possessed a memory from which neither fact nor date ever escaped. When idle, we used to apply to her, and never found her wrong. She used to employ us to go her errands among the people, and we got Miss Elphick broken in at last to like the long wanderings through the fir wood. We had two ponies, which we rode in turn; a tent in the shrubbery in summer, the garden in

autumn, the poultry-yard in spring, the farm-yard at all times, with innumerable visits to pay to friends of all degrees. Such was our Highland home; objects of interest all round us, ourselves objects of interest to all round, little princes and princesses in our Duchus, where the old feudal feelings still reigned in their deep intensity. And the face of Nature so beautiful—rivers, lakes, burnies, fields, banks, braes, moors, woods, mountains, heather, the dark forest, wild animals, wild flowers, wild fruits; the picturesque inhabitants, the legends of our race, fairy tales, raids of the clans, haunted spots, cairns of the murdered—all and everything that could touch the imagination, there abounded and acted as a charm on the children of the chieftain who was adored; for my father was the father of his people, loved for himself as well as for his name.

CHAPTER X

1556-1813

ROTHIEMURCHUS at this period contained four large farms—the Doune, where we lived ourselves, to which my father was constantly adding such adjoining scraps as circumstances enabled him now and then to get possession of; Inverdrurie, where lived his great-uncle Captain Lewis Grant, the last survivor of the old race; the Croft, where now was settled his cousin James Cameron; and the Dell, occupied by Duncan Macintosh, the forester, who had permission to take in as many acres of the adjacent moors as suited his husbandry. Quantities of smaller farms, from a mere patch to a decent steading, were scattered here and there among the beautiful birch woods, near swiftly running streams, or farther away among the gloom of the fir forest, wherever an opening afforded light enough for a strip of verdure to brighten the general carpet of cranberries and heather. The carpenter, the smith, the fox-hunter, the saw-millers, the wheel-wright, the few Chelsea pensioners, each had his little field, while comparatively larger holdings belonged to a sort of yeomanry coeval with our own possession, or even some of them found there by our ancestor the Laird of Muckerach, the second son of our Chief, who displaced the Shaws, for my father was but the seventh laird of Rothiemurchus; the Shaws reigned over this beautiful property before the Grants seized it, and they had succeeded the Comyns, lords not only of Badenoch but of half our part of the north besides. The forest was

at this time so extensive there was little room for tillage through the wide plain it covered. It was very pretty here and there to come upon a little cultivated spot, a tiny field by the burn-side with a horse or a cow upon it, a cottage often built of the black peat mould, its chimney, however, smoking comfortably, a churn at the door, a girl bleaching linen, or a guid-wife in her high white cap waiting to welcome us, miles away from any other spot so tenanted. Here and there upon some stream a picturesque saw-mill was situated, gathering its little hamlet round; for one or two held double saws, necessitating two millers, two assistants, two homes with all their adjuncts, and a larger wood-yard to hold, first the logs, and then all they were cut up into. The wood manufacture was our staple, on it depended our prosperity. It was at its height during the war, when there was a high duty on foreign timber; while it flourished so did we, and all the many depending on us; when it fell, the Laird had only to go back to black cattle again "like those that were before him." It was a false stimulus, said the political economists. If so, we paid for it.

Before introducing you, dear children, to our Rothiemurchus society, we must get up a bit of genealogy, or you would never understand our relationships or our manners or connections in the north country. In the reign of the English popish Mary and of the Scotch regencies, in the year 1556, I think, but am not quite certain, the Chief of the clan Grant presented his second son Patrick with the moor of Muckerach in Strathspey, on which he built a tower. The mother of Patrick was a Lady Margaret Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Athole, and cousin to the Queen. Whom he married I forget. He had been a clever enterprising man, for the Shaws having displeased the Government by repeated acts of insubordination, a common offence in those times, their lands were confiscated, and the Rothiemurchus portion presented to the Laird of Muckerach—"gin he could win it"—which without more ado he did, and



MUCHRACH CASTLE.

built himself a house at the Dell, the door stone of which he brought from his tower on the moor, and to this day there it is, with the date cut deep into it. The Shaws, though removed, remaining troublesome, he repaired the ruins of an old castle of the Comyns on an island in Loch-an-Eilan in case of any extraordinary mishap, and he pulled down and quite destroyed an old fort of the Shaws on the Doune Hill, leaving his malediction to any of his successors who should rebuild it. He must have had stirring times of it, yet he died peaceably in his bed, and was succeeded by sons, for some generations of no great note, a Duncan, a James, a Patrick, etc., none of them remarkable except Duncan, who was surnamed "of the Silver Cups" from possessing two silver cups, probably a rare piece of splendour in a Highland household in those days. A second James inherited more of the qualities of the first Laird; his father, whose name I am not sure of, but called in the Gaelic the Foolish Laird, was but a poor body; he let the Shaws get rather ahead again, married badly, and was altogether so unfit to rule that his rather early death was not regretted. He either fell over a rock or was drowned in a hunting party—nobody inquired into particulars.

The reign of his son opened unpleasantly; the Shaws were very troublesome, and Laird James had to fight them; the Shaws, of course, got the worst of it, though they lived through many a fight to fight again. At last their chief was killed, which sobered this remnant of a clan, but they had to bury him, and no grave would suit them but one in the kirkyard of Rothiemurchus beside his fathers. With such array as their fallen fortunes permitted of, they brought their dead and laid him unmolested in that dust to which we must all return. But oh, what horrid times! His widow next morning on opening the door of her house at Dalnavert caught in her arms the corpse, which had been raised in the night and carried back to her. It was buried again, and again it was raised, more times than I care to say, till Laird James announced he was

tired of the play. The corpse was raised but carried home no more. It was buried deep down within the kirk, beneath the Laird's own seat, and every Sunday when he went to pray he stamped his feet upon the heavy stone he had laid over the remains of his enemy.

Laird James took to wife a very clever woman, the daughter of Mackintosh of Killachy, nearly related to the Mackintosh Chief (Sir James Mackintosh, the famed of our day, is that Killachy's descendant). Her name was Grace, but on account of her height, and perhaps of her abilities, she was always called in the family Grizzel Mor. I do not know what fortune she brought beyond herself and the contents of a great green chest, very heavy, with two deep drawers at the bottom of it, which stood in the long garret as far back as my recollection reaches, and held the spare blankets well peppered, and with bits of tallow candles amongst them. She was the mother of Macalpine—Patrick Grant, surnamed Macalpine, I don't well know why, the great man of our line, who would have been great in any line. He removed from the Dell to the Doune, built what was then thought a fine house there, and had the family arms sculptured and coloured set over the door. I remember regretting the shutting up of that door, and the dashing over of the coat-of-arms with yellow mortar and stones. His brothers were Colonel William Grant, who married in 1711 Anne, a daughter of Ludovic Grant of Grant, and was the founder of the Ballindallochs, and Mr John Grant, who died unmarried. He had plenty of sons and daughters by his wife, who was a grand-daughter of the Laird of Grant, his Chief, one of whose sisters was married to Lovat. Macalpine ruled not only his own small patrimony, but mostly all the country round. His wisdom was great, his energy of mind and body untiring. He must have acted as a kind of despotic sovereign, for he went about with a body of four-and-twenty picked men, gaily dressed, of whom the principal and the favourite was his foster-brother, Ian Bain or John the Fair, also a Grant of the family of Achnahatanich. Any offences

committed anywhere this band took cognisance of. Macalpine himself was judge and jury, and the sentence quickly pronounced was as quickly executed, even when the verdict doomed to death. A corpse with a dagger in it was not infrequently met with among the heather, and sometimes a stout fir branch bore the remains of a meaner victim. I never heard the justice of a sentence questioned. Macalpine was a great man in every sense of the word, tall and strong made, and very handsome, and a beau; his trews (he never wore the kilt) were laced down the sides with gold, the brogues on his beautifully-formed feet were lined and trimmed with feathers, his hands, as soft and white as a lady's and models as to shape, could draw blood from the finger-nails of any other hand they grasped, and they were so flexible they could be bent back to form a cup which would hold a tablespoonful of water. He was an epicure, as indeed are all Highlanders in their own way. They are contented with simple fare, and they ask no great variety, but what they have must be of its kind the best, and cooked precisely to their fancy. The well of which Macalpine invariably drank was the Lady's Well at Tullochgrue, the water of which was certainly delicious. It was brought to him twice a day in a covered wooden vessel, a cogue or lippie.

There is no end to the stories of Macalpine's days—*was* none rather, for old-world tales are wearing out in the Highlands as everywhere else, and since we, the old race, have had to desert the spot where our forefathers dwelt, there is less going to keep alive those feudal feelings which were concentrated on the Laird's family.

Macalpine had by his first wife, Lady Mary, several sons—James who succeeded him, Patrick who went into the army, married some one whose name I forget, and retired after some years of service to Tullochgrue, and John, surnamed Corrou, from having been born at the foot of the rock of that name up in the hill at Glen Ennich. The young cattle were always sent up in the summer to eat the fine grass in the glens, and the lady having gone up at this time to the sheiling (a mere but

and ben which the herds inhabited), either to bleach her linens or for mere change of air, was suddenly taken ill in that wilderness. Without nurse or doctor she got as suddenly well, and brought her fine young son back with her to the Doune. The army was Corrou's destination of course; he saw a good deal of service, and I believe died somewhere abroad, a distinguished officer, though he began life by fighting a running duel, that is, challenging two or three in succession, rather than acknowledge his ignorance. He had brought with him to the south, where he joined his regiment, a horse accoutred; the horse died, and John Corrou went looking about for another to fit the saddle, which he insisted was the correct method of proceeding, and any one who questioned this had to measure swords with him. He had never seen asparagus; some being offered to him he began to eat it at the white end, which provoking a laugh at the mess table, he laid his hand on that terrible sword, and declared his undoubted right to eat what best pleased him. It is said that to his dying day he always put aside the tender green points of this vegetable. What marriages all the daughters of Macalpine made I never heard; one I know married Cameron of Glenevis. A few years after the death of Lady Mary, when her family had long been grown up and settled, Macalpine, then in his 78th year, took as his second bride a handsome woman, the daughter of Grant of Tullochgorm, a respectable tacksman. She bore him four sons, who were younger than some of his grandsons, Colonel William Grant, Captain Lewis Grant, George who was a sailor (a very uncommon profession for a Highlander), and died at sea, and Alexander who died young. Colonel William was a good deal abroad, he had been in the West Indies, Canada, etc.; he married in Ireland a widow of the name of Dashwood, who died childless, and the Colonel soon after retired to the Croft, where he lived happily, but not altogether respectably, to a good old age. His very handsome housekeeper, Jenny Gordon, bore him two children, our dearly-loved Annie and her brother

Peter Macalpine Grant, whom my father sent out to India as a cadet. Being the eldest living member of the family, Colonel William was tacitly elected to conduct my mother to the kirk on her arrival as a bride in Rothiemurchus, and on this occasion he dressed himself in full regimentals, and wore a queue tied with very broad black ribbon which nearly reached down to his chair when he was seated. With cocked hat beneath his arm, he led her by the point of a finger, and walking backwards on tiptoe up the aisle in the face of the congregation, relinquishing her with a bow so low as made her feel much smaller than the little man who thus honoured her. He was the man of fashion of the circle, excelling in those graces of manner which belonged to the beau of his day. He piqued himself on the amount of noise he made when rinsing out his mouth after dinner, squirting the water back into his finger-glass in a way that alarmed his neighbours. I have no recollection of the Colonel, he must have died when I was very young. Captain Lewis I remember perfectly.

He had fought at the siege of Gibraltar, and was I daresay an excellent officer, a little, handsome, dapper man, very gentlemanly, gay in manner, neat in habits, and with all the pride and spirit of his race. He had been given Inverdrue when my father resolved to make the Doune his own residence, and there I remember him from my earliest days till the autumn of 1814, when we lost him. His first wife, a Duff from Aberdeenshire, a pretty little old lady, had lived very unhappily with him, particularly since the death of their only child, a son, who had also gone into the army. They lived together for many years without speaking, though occupying the same rooms and playing backgammon together every night; when either made a disputed move the adversary's finger was silently pointed to the mistake, no word was ever spoken. My mother and my aunts rather liked the Captain's lady. She was the picture of a little old gentlewoman, riding every Sunday to church in a green joseph and black

bonnet, her pony led by a little maiden in a jacket and petticoat, plaid and snood. She also wore the hat perpetually, inside the house and out of it. The joseph was the habit of ceremony, put on when she made her calls or dined with the Laird. She wore a sort of shirt beneath the joseph with neatly plaited frills and ruffles. The Captain made a much happier second choice, Miss Grace Grant, Burnside, an elderly and a plain woman who had for some years kept house for her uncle, Macpherson of Invereshie, and whom the Captain had always liked and had *toasted*, as was the fashion of his day, whenever after dinner he had proceeded beyond his second tumbler. She was installed at Inverdrue when we came back in 1812 to make our real home of Rothiemurchus; and at the Croft, instead of the Colonel was the cousin James Cameron, the grandson of Macalpine, his mother having been the Lady Glenevis; and he had married his cousin, a granddaughter of Macalpine, her father being Patrick Grant of Tullochgrue, brother of Laird James.

But we must return to Macalpine himself, who died at the age of ninety-two, of some sore in his toe which the doctors wished to amputate; but the Laird resolved to go out of the world as he had come into it, perfect, so the foot mortified. His eldest son James succeeded him; he was called the Spreckled Laird on account of being marked with the smallpox; he had some of the sternness of his grandfather James, the Cruel Laird, and some of the talent of his father, for in very troubled times he managed to steer clear of danger and so transmit his property unimpaired. He had married highly, a Gordon, a relative of the Duke's, who brought him a little money, and a deal of good sense, besides beauty. She was of course a Jacobite, sent help to Prince Charlie, secreted her cousin Lord Lewis (the Lewie Gordon of the ballad) in the woods, and fed him and his followers secretly, setting out with her maid in the night to carry provisions up to the forest, which, while she was preparing, she persuaded the Laird were for other purposes. Mr Cameron showed us the very spot near

Tullochgrue where the rebels were resting when an alarm was given that the soldiers were in pursuit; they had just time to go through the house at Tullochgrue, in at one door and out at the other, and so got off to a different part of the forest, before the little pursuing detachment came up to the fire they had been seated round. The Lady Jean, though so fast a friend, could be, Highland like, a bitter enemy. She was systematically unkind to the widowed Lady Rachel, whose marriage indeed had been particularly disagreeable, not only to the family but also to the people; and she upon every occasion slighted the four young sons of Macalpine's old age. Poor Lady Rachel, not the meekest woman in the world, bore this usage of her children with little placidity. Once after the service in the kirk was over she stepped up with her fan in her hand to the corner of the kirkyard where all our graves are made, and taking off her high-heeled slipper she tapped with it on the stone laid over her husband's grave, crying out through her tears, "Macalpine! Macalpine! rise up for ae half-hour and see me richted!" She had indeed, poor body, need of some one to protect her if all tales be true of the usage she met with. Her sons, however, were honourably assisted by their half-nephews, and helped on in the world by them.

Three sons and two daughters were born to the Spreckled Laird and the Lady Jean; Patrick, called the White Laird from his complexion, always known to us as our uncle Rothie; he married a daughter of Grant of Elchies, a good woman and a pretty one, though nicknamed by the people the "yellow yawling," their name for the yellow-hammer, because her very pale skin became sallow as her health gave way; they had no children. The second son, William, the doctor, was my grandfather. Alexander, the third, and quite his mother's favourite, with his Gordon name, was a clergyman, married to an English Miss Neale; she bore him seven sons, who all died before their parents. Grace, the eldest daughter, married Cumming of Logie, Henrietta, the younger, and a great beauty, married

Grant of Glenmoriston ; both had large families, so that we had Highland cousins enough ; but of the elder set, all that remained when we were growing up were Mr Cameron, his wife, and her sister Mary, and our great-grand-uncle Captain Lewis. Mr Cameron, though only a lieutenant, had seen some service ; he had been at the battle of Minden, and had very often visited my grandfather in London. Poor Mrs Cameron was nearly blind, worn down too by the afflicting loss of all her children save one, a merchant in Glasgow. Miss Mary, therefore, managed the establishment, and kept the household from stagnating, as very likely would have been the case had the easy master and mistress been left to conduct the affairs of the Croft.

The Dell was after a very different style, the largest farm of any, but tenanted only by the forester, a handsome, clever, active little man of low degree. He had gained the heart of one much above him, the very pretty daughter of Stewart of Pityoulish, a tacksman on the Gordon property, and of some account in the country ; the father made many a wry face before he could gulp down as son-in-law, the thriving Duncan Macintosh. The marriage turned out very happily ; she was another Mrs Balquhider for management—such spinnings, and weavings, and washings, and dyeings, and churnings, and knittings, and bleachings, and candle-makings, and soap-boilings, and brewings, and feather-cleanings, never are seen or even written of in these days, as went on in those without intermission at the Dell. And this busy guid-wife was so quietly gentle, so almost sleepy in manner, one could hardly suppose her capable of thinking of work, much less of doing an amount of actual labour that would have amazed any but a Scotchwoman.

I have written these memoirs so much by snatches, never getting above a few pages done at a time since the idle days of Avranches, that I cannot but fear I often repeat myself, so many old recollections keep running in my head when I set about making notes of them, and not always in the order of their occurrence

either. The two years and a half we spent in Rothiemurchus after giving up England don't always keep clear of the summer visits to the dear old place afterwards, and about dates I am sure I am sometimes incorrect, for there are no sort of memoranda of any kind to guide me, and with such a long life to look back through now, the later years passed in such different scenes, I can only hope to give you a general impression of my youth in the Highlands. It was well we were so very happy within ourselves, had so large an acquaintance of all ranks of our own people, for except during the autumn months, when we were extremely in a bustle of gaiety, we had not much intercourse with any world beyond our own. Up the river there was Kinrara deserted; Mr Macpherson Grant, afterwards Sir George, who had succeeded his uncle at Invereshie, never lived there; Kinraig, where dwelt Mr and Mrs Mackintosh of Balnespick, we had little intercourse with; they had a large family, he was a zealous farmer, and she a very reserved woman. Belleville and Mrs Macpherson were in England, Miss Macpherson in Edinburgh, Cluny and his wife nobody knew. Down the river Castle Grant was shut up, the old General Grant of Ballindalloch dead, and his heir, also the heir of Invereshie, we were never very cordial with, although he was married to the sister of Mrs Gillies. Having almost none, therefore, of our own degree to associate with, we were thrown upon the "little bodies," of whom there was no lack both up and down the Spey. They used to come from all parts ostensibly to pay a morning visit, yet always expecting to be pressed to stay to dinner, or even all night. The Little Laird, for so my father was called—in the Gaelic, Ian Beag—and his foreign lady were great favourites; my mother, indeed, excelled in her entertainment of this degree of company, acted the Highland hostess to perfection, suited her conversation to her guests, leading it to such topics as they were most familiar with, as if she had primed herself for the occasion. Betty Campbell used to tell us that at first the people did not like their Little Laird bringing home an English wife, but when

they saw her so pretty, so tall, so gentle, they softened to her ; and then when came the chubby boy (for I was not accounted of, my uncle Rothie's deed of entail cutting me and my sex off from any but a very distant chance of the inheritance), a fine healthy child, born at the Doune, baptized into their own faith, my mother soon grew into favour ; and when, in addition to all this, she set up wheels in her kitchen, learned to count her hanks, and dye her wool, and bleach her web, "young creature as she was," she perfectly delighted them. At this time in the Highlands we were so remote from markets we had to depend very much on our own produce for most of the necessities of life. Our flocks and herds supplied us not only with the chief part of our food, but with fleeces to be wove into clothing, blanketing, and carpets, horn for spoons, leather to be dressed at home for various purposes, hair for the masons. Lint-seed was sown to grow into sheeting, shirting, sacking, etc. My mother even succeeded in common table linen ; there was the "dambrod" pattern, supposed to be the Highland translation of dame-board or backgammon, the "bird's eye," "snowdrop," "chain," and "single spot," beyond which the skill of neither old George Ross nor the weaver in Grantown could go. We brewed our own beer, made our bread, made our candles ; nothing was brought from afar but wine, groceries, and flour, wheat not ripening well so high above the sea. Yet we lived in luxury, game was so plentiful, red-deer, roe, hares, grouse, ptarmigan, and partridge ; the river provided trout and salmon, the different lochs pike and char ; the garden abounded in common fruits and common vegetables ; cranberries and raspberries ran over the country, and the poultry-yard was ever well furnished. The regular routine of business, where so much was done at home, was really a perpetual amusement. I used to wonder when travellers asked my mother if she did not find her life dull.

You will now be able to follow us in our daily rambles, to understand the places and people whom in

our walks we went to see. On rainy days we paced about the shrubbery, up the river to the Green or West Gate, over the Drum, back again to the White Gate and so home or out at the White Gate and along Tomnahurich to turn at the burn of Aldracardoch. In fine weather we wandered much farther afield; when we went to Inverdrue we passed the burn at Aldracardoch, over which a picturesque wooden bridge for foot-passengers was thrown. The saw-mill and the miller's house were close to the road, too close, for the mill when going had often frightened horses fording the stream. The miller's name was again Macgregor, that dispersed clan venturing now to resume the name they had been constrained to drop. They had, as was usual on such occasions, assumed the patronymic of whatever clan adopted them, remembering always that loved one which was their own. James Macgregor's father had been known as Gregor Grant, so the son slid the easier back to that of right belonging to him. The road held on under high banks of fine fir trees, then came the lighter birch, and then a turn brought us to the Loist Mor, a swampy field of some size backed by the forest—the view of which, as he drained it year by year, was so pleasant to the Captain that he had built himself a covered seat among the birch in front of it, which used to be the extent of his walk on a summer's evening. Ten minutes more brought us up a rugged brae and past the offices upon the moor at Inverdrue, in the midst of which bare expanse stood the very ugly house my uncle Rothie had placed there. It was very comfortable within, and the kind welcome, and the pleasant words, and the good cheer we found, made it always a delight to us to be sent there.

The Captain and Mrs Grant lived in the low parlour to the left of the entrance, within which was a light closet in which they slept; the hall was flagged, but a strip of home-made carpet covered the centre, of the same pattern as that in the parlour, a check of black and green. The parlour curtain was home-made too, of linsey-woolsey, red and yellow. A good peat fire

burned on the hearth; a rug knit by Mrs Grant kept the fireplace tidy. A round mahogany table stood in the middle of the room; a long mahogany table was placed against the wall, with a large japanned tray standing up on end on it; several hair-bottomed chairs were ranged all round. A japanned corner-cupboard fixed on a bracket at some height from the floor very much ornamented the room, as it was filled with the best tall glasses on their spiral stalks, and some china too fine for use; a number of silver-edged punch-ladles, and two silver-edged and silver-lined drinking-horns were presented to full view on the lowest shelf, and outside upon the very top was a large china punch-bowl. But the cupboard we preferred was in the wall next the fire. It was quite a pantry; oatcakes, barley scones, flour scones, butter, honey, sweetmeats, cheese, and wine, and spiced whisky, all came out of the deep shelves of this agreeable recess, as did the great key of the dairy; this was often given to one of us to carry to old Mary the cook, with leave to see her skim and whip the fine rich cream, which Mrs Grant would afterwards pour on a whole pot of jam and give us for luncheon. This dish, under the name of "bainne briste," or broken milk, is a great favourite wherever it has been introduced. In the centre of the ceiling hung a glass globe to attract the flies; over the chimney-piece was the Captain's armoury, two or three pairs of pistols safely encased in red flannel bags very dusty from the peats, several swords of different sorts in their scabbards crossed in various patterns, and a dirk or two. On the chimney-slab was a most curious collection of snuff-boxes of all sorts and shapes and sizes intermixed with a few large foreign shells. The Captain, in a wig, generally sat in a corner chair with arms to it, never doing anything that ever I saw. He was old and getting frail, eighty-five or eighty-six, I believe. Sometimes when he was not well he wore a plaid cloak, and a nightcap, red or white, made by his industrious wife in a stitch she called shepherd's knitting; it was done with a little hook which she manufactured for herself out of



INVERDRUE HOUSE.

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the tooth of an old tortoise-shell comb, and she used to go on looping her home-spun wool as quick as fingers could move, making not only caps, but drawers and waistcoats for winter wear for the old husband she took such care of. She was always busy when in the house, and out of doors she managed the farm, and drove the Captain out in a little low phaeton I remember my father buying for them in London. Occasionally this first summer they dined with us, and then the old great-grand-uncle looked very nice in his best suit. Mrs Grant was really charming, full of Highland lore, kind and clever and good, without being either refined or brilliant, and certainly plain in person. She had a fine voice, and sang Gaelic airs remarkably well. My mother was extremely attached to this excellent woman, and spent many a morning with her; we used to watch them convoying each other home after these visits, turning and returning upon the Tomnahurich road ever so many times as each lady neared her own premises, wondering which would be first to give in and take final leave of the other.

It was a good mile beyond Inverdrue to the Dell, and we had to cross five streams of rapid running water to reach it, for into so many channels did the river Drue divide about a couple of miles below the bridge of Coylam. The intervening strips of land were all thickets of birch, alder, hazel, and raspberries, through which the well-trodden paths wound leading to the simple bridges of logs without a rail that crossed the water, a single log in all cases but one, where the span being very wide two were laid side by side. We skipped over them better than I at least could do it now, but poor Miss Elphick! to get her over the one with two logs was no easy matter, the others she did not attempt for many a day unless assisted by some of the saw-miller's lads who obligingly waded the water by her side. One day we had a charming adventure on Drue side; just as we were preparing to cross the bridge an old woman in a high-crowned cap, a blanket plaid, and a bundle on her back, stepped on to it on the opposite side. We

were generally accompanied by an immense Newfoundland dog called Neptune, an especial favourite; he happened to be marching in front and proceeded to cross the log; on he stepped, so did the old woman, gravely moved the dog, and quietly came on the old woman, till they met in the middle. To pass was impossible, to turn back on that narrow footway equally so; there they stood, the old woman in considerable uncertainty. The dog made up his mind more quickly, he very quietly pushed her out of the way; down she fell into the stream, and on he passed as if nothing extraordinary had happened. She was a good old creature, just as much amused as we were, and laughed as heartily, and she spread the fame of Neptune far and near, for everybody had the story before the day was over.

The Dell was an ugly place, a small low house, only two or three stunted trees in the garden behind it, and a wide, sandy, stony plain all round, never a bit the more fertile for the regular inundation at the Lammas tide, when the Druie always overflowed its banks. Here the first lairds of Rothiemurchus had lived after a fashion that must have been of the simplest. It then became the jointure house, and in it the Lady Jean passed her widowhood with a few fields and £100 a year. Mrs Macintosh was a tidy guid-wife, but nothing beyond the thriving farmer's helpmate. She and her husband lived mostly in the kitchen, and each in their own department did the work of a head servant. The cheer she offered us was never more than bread and cheese and whisky, but the oaten bread was so fresh and crisp, the butter so delicious, and the cheese—not the ordinary skimmed milk curd, the leavings of the dairy, but the Saturday's kebbock made of the overnight and the morning's milk, poured cream and all into the yearnin tub; the whisky was a bad habit, there was certainly too much of it going. At every house it was offered, at every house it must be tasted or offence would be given, so we were taught to believe. I am sure now that had we steadily refused compliance with

so incorrect a custom it would have been far better for ourselves, and might all the sooner have put a stop to so pernicious a habit among the people. Whisky-drinking was and is the bane of that country; from early morning till late at night it went on. Decent gentlewomen began the day with a dram. In our house the bottle of whisky, with its accompaniment of a silver salver full of small glasses, was placed on the side-table with cold meat every morning. In the pantry a bottle of whisky was the allowance per day, with bread and cheese in any required quantity, for such messengers or visitors whose errands sent them in that direction. The very poorest cottages could offer whisky; all the men engaged in the wood manufacture drank it in goblets three times a day, yet except at a merry-making we never saw any one tipsy.

We sometimes spent an evening at the Dell. Duncan Macintosh played admirably on the violin, it was delightful to dance to his music. Many a happy hour have we reeled away both at the Doune and at the Dell, servants and all included in the company, with that one untiring violin for our orchestra.

A walk to the Croft led us quite in another direction. We generally went to the White Gate, and through the new garden on to the Milltown muir past Peter the Pensioner's wooden house, and then climbing over the wooden railing wandered on among the birch woods till we reached the gate at the Lochan Mor; that passed, we got into the fir wood, refreshed ourselves in the proper season with blackberries and cranberries, then climbing another fence re-entered the birch wood, in the midst of which nestled the two cottages called the Croft. The houses were not adjoining; the upper one connected with the farm offices was the family dwelling, the lower and newer one at a little distance was for strangers. Old Mrs Cameron, who was by this time nearly blind, sat beside the fire in a bonnet and shawl as if ready for walking, talking little, but sighing a great deal. Miss Mary bustled about in her managing way as kind as her nature would let her be; there was little

fear of any one getting a Saturday's kebbock at the Croft! a little honey with a barley scone was the extent of Miss Mary's hospitality. They had always a good fire and a kind welcome for the Laird's children. We liked going to see them, and when Mr Cameron was not too busy with his farm and could stay within and play on the Jew's harp to us, we were quite happy. He played more readily and better at the Doune, the tender airs which suited the instrument affecting his poor melancholy wife, of whom he was passionately fond. He was a constant visitor at the Doune, dining with us at least three times a week, but no weather ever prevented his returning to the old wife at night; well wrapped in his plaid he braved all weathers, walking his two or three miles in the dark winter weather as if he had been thirty-six instead of seventy-six. He was thoroughly a gentleman; no better specimen of a Highlander and a soldier ever adorned our mountains. Old and young, gentle and simple, all loved Mr Cameron. He and Mrs Grant, Inverdrue, were two flowers in the wilderness; other society could well be dispensed with when theirs was attainable. Almost all my stories of the olden time were learned either at Inverdrue or the Croft; they never wearied of telling what I never wearied of listening to. John Grant of Achnahatanich was also one of the chroniclers of the past, but he never interested me so much in his more fanciful stories as did my old aunt and my old cousin in their apparently accurate relations. They may have insinuated a little more pride of race than was exactly suited to the "opening day," yet it did no harm so far as I was concerned, and the younger ones had no turn for these antiquities. Jane in childhood was more taken up with the scenery than the people.

The small farms in Rothiemurchus lay all about in various directions, most of them beautifully situated; the extent of the old forest was said to be sixteen square miles, and it was reckoned that about ten more were growing up, either of natural fir, or my father's planted larch. The whole lay in the bosom of the

Grampians in a bend of a bow, as it were, formed by the mountains, the river Spey being the string and our boundary. The mountains are bare, not very picturesquely shaped, yet imposing from their size. Many glens run up them all richly carpeted with sweet grass peculiarly suited to the fattening of cattle, one or two of these ending in a lake dropped at the bottom of a screen of precipices. One pass, that of Larrig, leads to Braemar, Lord Fife's country, with whose lands and the Duke of Gordon's ours march in that direction. Several rapid streams run through the forest, the smaller burnies rattling along their rocky beds to join the larger, which in their turn flow on to be lost in the Spey. The Luinach and the Bennie are quite rivers, the one rises north from Loch Morlich in Glenmore, the other south from Loch Ennich in Glen Ennich; they join just above the bridge of Coylam and form the Druie, an unmanageable run of water that divides, subdivides, and sometimes changes its principal channel and keeps a fine plain of many acres in a state of stony wilderness. The vagaries of the Druie were not alone watched by the crofters on its bank with anxiety. There was a tradition that it had broken from its old precincts on the transference of the property to the Grants from the Shaws, that the Grants would thrive while the Druie was tranquil, but when it wearied of its new channel and returned to its former course, the fortune of the new family would fail. The change happened in 1829, at the time of the great Lammas floods so well described, not by our pleasant friend Tom Lauder, but by a much greater man, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder of Fountainhall, the Grange, and Relugas, author of *Lochandhu* and the *Wolf of Badenoch*. We used to laugh at the prediction!

Besides the streams, innumerable lochs lay hid among the pine trees of that endless forest. On one of these was the small island completely occupied by the ruins of the Comyn fortress, a low long building with one square tower, a flank wall with a door in it and one or two small windows high up, and a sort of

house with a gable end attached, part of which stood on piles. The people said there was a zigzag causeway beneath the water, from the door of the old castle to the shore, the secret of which was always known to three persons only. We often tried to hit upon this causeway, but we never succeeded.

A great number of paths crossed the forest, and one or two cart-roads; the robbers' road at the back of Loch-an-Eilan was made by Rob Roy for his own convenience when out upon his cattle raids, and a decayed fir tree was often pointed out as the spot where Laird James, the Spreckled Laird, occasionally tied a bullock or two when he heard of such visitors in the country; they were of course driven away and never seen again, but the Laird's own herds were not touched. It has been the fashion to father all moss-trooping throughout the Highlands on Rob Roy, but there was a Macpherson nearer to us, and a Mackintosh equally clever at the gathering of gear—Mackintosh of Borlam, of whom I shall have more to tell anon.

In a country of such remarkable beauty, and with so many objects of interest to add to the mere pleasure of exercise, our long walks became delightful even to such a Cockney as Miss Elphick; she was a clever woman, and soon came to appreciate all the worth of her new situation. She studied up to it, and though an innate vulgarity never left her, the improvement in her ideas was very perceptible. She corresponded occasionally with her only surviving sister, and regularly with a Mr Somebody, a builder; when she became more sociable she used to read to us her letters descriptive of the savage land she had got into, and what was worse for us, she recounted her love adventures. No beauty, no heiress, ever had been the heroine of more romances than had fallen to the share of this little bundle of a body, by her own account. It never entered our young heads to doubt the catalogue. Mr Somebody's replies did not come very frequently from the beginning, neither were they very long, and by degrees they ceased. She did most of the writing. I

remember her description of her first kirk Sunday was cleverly and truthfully and most amusingly told; it must have astonished a Londoner.

The unadorned but neat small kirk is very different now, when hardly any one sits in it, from what it was then, when filled to overflowing. It was much out of repair; neither doors nor windows fitted, the plaster fallen from the roof lay in heaps about the seats, the walls were rough, the graveyard overgrown with nettles, even the path from the gate was choked with weeds in many places. Far from there being any ceremony about this Highland style of worship, there was hardly even decency, so rude were all the adjuncts of our "sermon Sunday." Mr Stalker was dead—the good man who drank so many cups of tea, whom my wicked aunt Mary used to go on helping to more, cup after cup, till one evening they counted nine, always pressing another on him by repeating that his regular number was three! It was a luxury that probably in those dear times the poor Dominie could seldom afford himself at home, for he had a wife and children, and his income must have been economically managed to bring them all through the year. He had £5 from Queen Anne's bounty, a house and garden and a field and £10 from my father, and he taught the school. My mother got his wife £4 additional for teaching sewing, which they hailed as a perfect godsend. Well, he was gone, and he had not been replaced, so we had sermon only every third Sunday in our own kirk; the devout attended the neighbouring parishes on the blank days, some of the kirks being at no great distance, speaking Highlandly, two to five or six miles. Good Mr Peter of Duthil was gone, he had died in the winter; his widow and her school removed to Inverness, and another Grant had succeeded him, for of course the patronage was very faithfully kept in the clan. The new minister was a perfect contrast to his predecessor; he was fat, thickset, florid, with a large cauliflower wig on his large head. Within the head was more learning than maybe half a dozen professors could boast of among them, but it was

not in the divinity line ; his turn was acutely satirical ; he had been both a poet and an essayist, what he was now it would be hard to say ; he seemed to have no particular employment ; his wife managed the glebe, the parishes managed themselves, and he certainly gave himself little trouble about his sermons. What he did in Gaelic I cannot say ; in English he had but two, although he altered the texts to give them an air of variety ; the text did not always suit the discourse, but that was no matter. The sermons were by no means bad, though from constant repetition they grew tiresome ; it was lucky we had six weeks to forget each of them in. One was against an undue regard for the vanities of life, and always contained a sentence on the lilies of the valley, and Solomon's glory ; the other was on charity. A violent Tory, detesting the House of Hanover, yet compelled to pray for the reigning family, he cut the business as short as possible—"God bless the King, and all the Royal Family ; as Thou hast made them great make them GOOD," with great emphasis, and then he hurried on to more agreeable petitions. The kirk was very near our house, on a height in the field below the Drum, prettily sheltered by planting, and commanding from the gate a fine view of the valley of the Spey. The bell tolled from time to time, and as the hour for the service approached the crowd began to pour in from either side, the white caps and the red plaids gleaming through the birch woods on the bank between the kirk field and the Drum, through which the path lay. Our farm people moved up from the low grounds to join them, and such of the house servants as understood the Gaelic ; the rest followed us an hour or more later to the English portion of the ceremony. We generally walked from the house along the flow-dyke by the only piece left of the backwater, under the shade of natural alder to the right and a thriving plantation of larch to the left ; a small gate painted green opened on the road to the West lodge ; we had to cross it into the field and then step up the long slope to the kirkyard. My father opened the



THE KIRK.

gate to let my mother pass; Miss Elphick next, we three according to our ages followed, then he went in himself. We sat in a long pew facing the pulpit, with two seats, one in front for the laird, and one behind for the servants. There was a wooden canopy over it with a carved frieze all round and supporting pillars flat but fluted, and with Ionic capitals like moderate rams' horns. Macalpine's seat was at the end, nothing to mark it but his scutcheon on a shield; the Captain, his surviving son, sat there. There were one hundred and sixty years between the birth of that father and the death of that son, more than five generations.

The stir consequent on our entrance was soon hushed, and the minister gave out the psalm; he put a very small dirty volume up to one eye, for he was near-sighted, and read as many lines of the old version of the rhythmical paraphrase (we may call it) of the Psalms of David as he thought fit, drawling them out in a sort of sing-song. He stooped over the pulpit to hand his little book to the precentor, who then rose and calling out aloud the tune—"St George's tune," "Auld Aberdeen," "Hondred an' fifteen," etc.—began himself a recitative of the first line on the key-note, then taken up and repeated by the congregation; line by line he continued in the same fashion, thus doubling the length of the *exercise*, for really to some it was no play—serious severe screaming quite beyond the natural pitch of the voice, a wandering search after the air by many who never caught it, a flourish of difficult execution and plenty of the *tremolo* lately come into fashion. The dogs seized this occasion to bark (for they always came to the kirk with the family), and the babies to cry. When the minister could bear the din no longer he popped up again, again leaned over, touched the precentor's head, and instantly all sound ceased. The long prayer began, everybody stood up while the minister asked for us such blessings as he thought best: with closed *eyes* it should have been, that being part of the "rubric"; our oddity of a parson closed but one, the one with which he had squinted at

the psalm-book, some affection of the other eyelid rendering it unmanageable. The prayer over, the sermon began; that was my time for making observations, "Charity" and "Solomon's Lilies" soon requiring no further attention. Few save our own people sat around; old grey-haired rough-visaged men that had known my grandfather and great-grandfather, black, red, and fair hair, belonging to such as were in the prime of life, younger men, lads, boys—all in the tartan. The plaid as a wrap, the plaid as a drapery, with kilt to match on some, blue trews on others, blue jackets on all. The women were plaided too, an outside shawl was seen on none, though the wives wore a large handkerchief under the plaid, and looked picturesquely matronly in their very high white caps. A bonnet was not to be seen, no Highland girl ever covered her head; the girls wore their hair neatly braided in front, plaited up in Grecian fashion behind, and bound by the snood, a bit of velvet or ribbon placed rather low on the forehead and tied beneath the plait at the back. The wives were all in homespun, home-dyed linsey-woolsey gowns, covered to the chin by the modest kerchief worn outside the gown. The girls who could afford it had a Sabbath day's gown of like manufacture and very bright colour, but the throat was more exposed, and generally ornamented with a string of beads, often amber; some had to be content with the best blue flannel petticoat and a clean white jacket, their ordinary and most becoming dress, and few of these had either shoes or stockings; but they all wore the plaid, and they folded it round them very gracefully.

They had a custom in the spring of washing their beautiful hair with a decoction of the young buds of the birch trees. I do not know if it improved or hurt the hair, but it agreeably scented the kirk, which at other times was wont to be overpowered by the combined odours of snuff and peat reek, for the men snuffed immensely during the delivery of the English sermon; they fed their noses with quills fastened by strings to

the lids of their mulls, spooning up the snuff in quantities and without waste. The old women snuffed too, and groaned a great deal, to express their mental sufferings, their grief for all the backslidings supposed to be thundered at from the pulpit; lapses from faith was their grand self-accusation, lapses from virtue were, alas! little commented on; temperance and chastity were not in the Highland code of morality.

The dispersion of the crowd was a pretty sight; the year I write of dreamed of no Free Kirk doings; the full kirk nearly filled the field with picturesque groups, so many filing off north, south, east, and west, up the steep narrow road to the Drum, by the path through the bank of birchwood to the garden gate, along the green meadow beneath the guigne trees to the Doune farm offices—the servants by the green gate under the crooked beech tree to the house; the family, after shaking hands and speaking and bowing and smiling all round, returning by the flow-dyke and the alders. The minister dined with us, and thus ended our Sunday, but not our acquaintance with him. We got to like this eccentric man, his head was so well filled, and his heart, in spite of the snarl, so kindly, that old and young we took to him, and often prevailed on him to spend a few days with us. He was a disappointed man, equal to a very different position, and he was lost in the manse of Duthil, far from any mind capable of understanding his, and not fitted to go actively through the duties of his calling.

Far different, yet no truer or better divine, in one sense of the word, was his neighbour, our prime favourite, the minister of Abernethy, known through all the country as Parson John. He was a little merry man, fond of good eating, very fond of good drinking, no great hand at a sermon, but a capital hand at the filling or the emptying of a bowl of punch. He was no scholar; his brother of Duthil used to wonder how he ever got through the University, he had so little skill in the humanities—of learning. For good practical sense, honesty of purpose, kindness of heart, tender

feeling combined with energetic action, Parson John could hardly have been surpassed. He found his parish a nest of smugglers, cattle-stealers, idlers, every sort of immorality rife in it. He left it filled by the best-conducted set of people in the country. He was all the more respected for the strictness of his discipline, yet a sly joke against the minister was much relished by his flock.

There was no very deep religious feeling in the Highlands up to this time. The clergy were revered in their capacity of pastors without this respect extending to their persons unless fully merited by propriety of conduct. The established form of faith was determinately adhered to, but the *kittle questions*, which had so vexed the Puritanic south, had not yet troubled the minds of their northern neighbours. Our mountains were full of fairy legends, old clan tales, forebodings, prophecies, and other superstitions, quite as much believed in as the Bible. The Shorter Catechism and the fairy stories were mixed up together to form the innermost faith of the Highlander, a much gayer and less metaphysical character than his Saxon-tainted countryman.

The other clergyman of our acquaintance was Mr Macdonald of Alvie, our nearest neighbour of the three. He was a clever worldly man, strictly decorous, not unfriendly, though most careful in his management, particular in ascertaining the highest price of meal, his stipend depending on the fluctuation of the market, the ministers being paid in kind, so many "bolls of victual"—meaning corn. He preached well, rather at length, and made very fervent tiresome prayers and immensely long graces, and of all people in the world he was detested most heartily by our friend the minister of Duthil; his very name was an abomination, why we could never find out. He had been twice married, in neither case happily, both wives having become invalids. It never struck any one that the situation of his manse, nearly surrounded by water, could have affected the health of women not naturally

strong. The second Mrs Macdonald was dying at this time. We often sent her delicacies, but never saw her; indeed we rarely saw any of the parsons' wives, they seemed to keep quietly at home, like Mrs Balquhiddie, "making the honey."

We *heard* plenty, however, of the wife of Parson John, an excellent, managing woman, who kept her husband in great order. They had a large family, the bolls of victual were not many, and the glebe lands were small. She had to keep her eyes open, and water the ash tree betimes in the morning. One of her most prolific sources of income was her dairy. She piqued herself on what she made of it, and was accused by the minister of a very economical use of its produce in the house, in order to send the more to market. Now, of all simple refreshments Parson John loved best a drink of fine milk, well coated with cream; this luxury his wife denied him, the cream must go into the churn, skimmed milk was fittest for the thirsty. In spite of her oft-repeated refusals and her hidden key she suspected that the minister contrived to visit the dairy, sundry cogues of set milk at times having the appearance of being broken into. She determined to watch; and she had not long to wait before she detected the culprit in the act, met him face to face in the passage as he closed the door. She charged him stoutly with his crime, he as stoutly denied it, hard words passed; but the poor minister! he had forgotten to take off his hat, he had put his mouth to the cogue, the brim of the hat had touched the cream—there it was fringed with her treasure before her eyes, an evidence of his guilt, and he denying it! What Highland wife could bear such atrocity? "Man," said the daughter of Dalachapple (ten acres of moor without a house on it), "how daur ye, before the Lord! and ye his graceless minister! see there!" He told the story himself, with remarkable humour, over the punch-bowl.

The Captain had another story of him; his sermons were mostly practical, he was unskilled in scholastic learning, and sometimes when he had gone his round

of moral duties he would, for lack of matter, treat his congregation to a screed from the papers. They were stirring times, revolutions and battles by sea and land. The minister was a keen politician, his people by no means unwilling to hear the news, although they very earnestly shook their heads after listening to it. False intelligence was as largely circulated then as now, it came and it spread, and then it was to be contradicted. The parson gave it as he got it, and one Sunday delivered a marvellous narrative of passing events. Finding out during the week his error, he hastened honestly to correct it, so, on the following Sunday, after the psalm and the prayer and the solemn giving out of the text, he raised his hands and thus addressed his flock, "My brethren, it was a' lees I told ye last Sabbath day." How the minister of Duthil enjoyed this story!

The next incident that comes back on memory is the death of old George Ross, the henwife's husband; he caught cold, and inflammation came on; a bottle of whisky, or maybe more, failed to cure him, so he died, and was waked, after the old fashion, shaved and partly dressed and set up in his bed, all the country-side collecting round him. After abundance of refreshment the company set to dancing, when, from the jolting of the floor, out tumbled the corpse into the midst of the reel, and away scampered the guests screaming, and declaring the old man had come to life again. As the bereaved wife had not been the gentlest of helpmates, this was supposed to be "a warning"—of what was not declared; all that was plain was that the spirit of the deceased was dissatisfied; many extraordinary signs were spoken of, as we heard from my mother's maid.

Before winter our cousin Patrick Grant of Glenmoriston died suddenly, while walking on the banks of his own beautiful river, of disease of the heart. I learnt a lesson from this event; some one told it to me, and I, very sorry, for Patrick had been kind to us, went straight to the drawing-room with my sad news. My mother immediately went into hysterics, was

carried to bed, and lost her baby; all which was represented to me by my father as a consequence of my want of consideration. I had no nerves then (like the famous Duchess of Marlborough), and could not comprehend the misery caused by their derangement.

Our neighbour Belleville was the son of *Ossian*, the Mr Macpherson who pretended to translate Ossian, and who made a fine fortune out of the Nabob of Arcot's debts. Ossian Macpherson, Highland to the very heart, bought land round his birthplace, and built the fine house on the heights near Kingussie, which for many a year looked so bleak, and bare, and staring, while the planting on the hillsides was young. He had four children. To his eldest son, James, our friend, he left his large estates. The second, Charles, he sent in the Civil Service to India, where he died. His two daughters he portioned handsomely. Our Belleville, who had also been in India, returned to take possession of his Highland property about the year 1800. He married the summer my sister Mary was born, and brought a young Edinburgh wife home to the two London sisters. Juliet Macpherson, the younger sister, very pretty and very clever, soon married Dr, afterwards Sir David, Brewster. Anne lived through many a long year with her brother and his somewhat despotic wife until he died, and she herself became the Lady Belleville. Our Belleville inherited many vexations. Ossian had got entangled in some law-suits, and his son knowing little of business left too much to his law-agents, and so it happened that after living handsomely for some years, he found it necessary to shut up Belleville, let the farm, and remove to the neighbourhood of London, where they watched the unravelling of their tangled skeins. Almost all their difficulties were over in this year of which I am writing. They had returned to Belleville, and from this time they were our kindest neighbours, living like ourselves, winter and summer, in their Highland home. We became naturally dependent on the resources of each other; never a shadow of disagreement came between

us. The intimacy had the most favourable effect upon us young people; Belleville was thoroughly a gentleman, his tastes were refined, his reading extensive, his kindness unfailing. There was a harshness in the character of Mrs Macpherson that we could have wished to soften; her uncompromising integrity was applied sternly to weaker mortals. Her activity, her energy, and her industry, all admirably exerted in her own sphere of duties, rose up against any tolerance of the shortcomings in these respects of less vigorous temperaments. She measured all by her own rigid rules, her religious feelings partaking of this asperity. She was own sister to old Mause in the strength and the acrimony of her puritanism. I used so to wish her to say to herself, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," but she had no idea that there was a doubt of her being justified. She was right in principle, though ungentle, almost unchristian, in practice. This fault apart, a better woman never existed, anxious to help all around her of all degrees. She had a clear understanding, good quick abilities, and a warm heart. We owed much in many ways to Mrs Macpherson, and we ended the year with her, my father and mother, Jane and I, spending the Christmas—New style—with these good neighbours. We ourselves, who did everything Highland fashion, kept the Old style at home.

We had three harvest-homes to keep in Rothiemurchus: a very small affair at the Croft; luncheon in the parlour for us children only, and a view of the barn prepared for the dinner and dance to the servants. It was a much merrier meeting at the Dell; my father and mother and all of us, stuffed into or on the carriage, drove there to dinner, which was served in the best parlour, my father at the head of the table, Duncan Macintosh at the foot, and those for whom there was not room at the principal board went with at least equal glee to a side table. There was always broth, mutton boiled and roasted, fowls, muir-fowl—three or four pair on a dish—apple-pie and rice pudding, such jugs upon jugs of cream, cheese, oatcakes and butter; thick

bannocks of flour instead of wheaten bread, a bottle of port, a bottle of sherry, and after dinner no end to the whisky punch. In the kitchen was all the remains of the sheep, more broth, haggis, head and feet singed, puddings black and white, a pile of oaten cakes, a kit of butter, two whole cheeses, one tub of sowans, another of curd, whey and whisky in plenty. The kitchen party, including any servants from house or farm that could be spared so early from the Croft, the Doune, or Inverdrue, dined when we had done, and we ladies, leaving the gentlemen to their punch, took a view of the kitchen festivities before retiring to the bedroom of Mrs Macintosh to make the tea. When the gentlemen joined us the parlour was prepared for dancing. With what ecstasies we heard the first sweep of that masterly bow across the strings of my father's Cremona! The first strathspey was danced by my father and Mrs Macintosh; if my mother danced at all, it was later in the evening. My father's dancing was peculiar—a very quiet body, and very busy feet, they shuffled away in double quick time steps of his own composition, boasting of little variety, sometimes ending in a turn-about which he imagined was the fling; as English it was altogether as if he had never left Hertfordshire. My mother did better. She moved quietly in Highland matron fashion, "high and disposedly" like Queen Elizabeth and Mrs Macintosh, for however lightly the lasses footed it, etiquette forbade the wives to do more than "tread the measure." William and Mary moved in the grave style of my mother; Johnnie without instruction danced beautifully; Jane was perfection, so light, so active, and so graceful; but of all the dancers there, none was equal to little Sandy—afterwards Factor—the son of Duncan Macintosh, but not of his wife.

Some years before his marriage the forester had been brought into our country by what was called the Glenmore Company, a set of wood-merchants from Hull, who had bought the forest of Glenmore from the Duke of Gordon for, I think, £20,000. They made at least double off it, and it had been offered to my uncle Rothie,

wood and mountain, glen and lake, for £10,000, and declined as a dear bargain. Mr Osborne, the gentleman superintending the felling of all this timber, brought Duncan Macintosh from Strathspey as head of the working gangs, and left him in that wild isolated place with no companion for the whole winter but a Mary, of a certain age, and not well favoured. The result was the birth of Sandy, a curious compound of his young handsome father and his plain elderly mother. It was this Mary who was the cook at Inverdrue, and a very good one she was, and a decent body into the bargain, much considered by Mrs Macintosh. There was no attempt to excuse, much less to conceal her history; in fact, such occurrences were too common to be commented on. She always came to the Dell harvest-home, and after the more stately reels of the opening of the dance were over, when the servants and labourers and neighbours of that class came by turns into the parlour, Mary came among the others, and I have seen her figuring away in the same set with Mr Macintosh, his good wife looking on with a smile: too pretty and too good she was to fear such rivalry. At her marriage she had brought little Sandy home and as much as lay in her power acted a mother's part by him; her children accused her even of undue partiality for the poor boy who was no favourite with his father; if so, the seed was sown in good ground, for Sandy was the best son she had. It was a curious state of manners; I have thought of it often since.

We were accustomed to dance with all the company, as if they had been our equals; it was always done. There was no fear of undue assumption on the one side, or low familiarity on the other; a vein of good-breeding ran through all ranks influencing the manners and rendering the intercourse of all most particularly agreeable. About midnight the carriage would take our happy party home. It was late enough before the remainder separated.

The Doune harvest-home was very like that at the Dell, only that the dinner was at the farm kitchen and

the ball in the barn, and two fiddlers stuck up on tubs formed the orchestra. A sheep was killed, and nearly a boll of meal baked, and a larger company invited, for our servants were numerous and they had leave to invite relations. We went down to the farm in the carriage drawn by some of the men, who got glasses of whisky apiece for the labour, and we all joined in the reels for the hour or two we stayed, and drank punch made with brown sugar and enjoyed the fun, and felt as little annoyed as the humbler guests by the state of the atmosphere.

We had no other ploy till Christmas Eve, when we started for Belleville. Even now, after all these years of a long life, I can bring to mind no house pleasanter to visit at. At this time the drawing-room floor had not been refurnished; they lived in their handsome dining-room and the small library through it. The company, besides ourselves, was only one or two of the young Clarkes and a "Badenoch body," but we had so kind a welcome; Belleville was a host in a hundred, Mrs Macpherson shone far more in her own house than she did in any other. Her lively conversation, her good music, and her desire to promote amusement made her a very agreeable hostess. We young people walked about all the mornings, danced and laughed all the evenings till the whist for the elders began, Belleville liking his rubber; and what particularly delighted Jane and me, we sat up to supper, a sociable meal, one we never saw at home where the dinner was late. At Belleville they dined at five o'clock, and as the card-playing was seldom over before midnight, the appearance of a well-filled tray was not mistimed. Roasted potatoes only, fell to our share, and a bit of butter with them. We were quite satisfied, so much so, indeed, that we privately determined, when talking over our happy evenings up at the top of that large house in one of the attic rooms no amount of peats could warm, that when we had houses of our own we would introduce the supper tray, and roasted potatoes should, as at Belleville, be piled on the centre dish.

Miss Macpherson, who liked all of us, was in great good-humour during our visit. We remained till after the New Year, and then returned home to make preparations for the passing of *our* Christmas-time—Old style—the season of greatest gaiety in the Highlands. It was kept by rejoicings and merry-makings amongst friends, no religious services being performed on any day but Sunday.

CHAPTER XI

1813

CHRISTMAS, Old style, 1813, Belleville and Mrs Macpherson spent with us. They were easily entertained. She worked and gossiped with my mother all the mornings, till the regular hour for her duty walk, a task she performed conscientiously as soon as it was too dark to thread her needle. He had one or two strolls during the day, and plenty of old plays and newspapers to read. In the evenings they enjoyed our merry games and a little music, before we young ones were sent to bed, as much as they did the rubber of whist afterwards. We had two dinner-parties for our guests. Balnespick and Mrs Mackintosh were with us one day; she was a really beautiful woman, fair, tall, slight, and graceful, but very still and silent. How little did we dream then that one of the sons of this couple would be married to a granddaughter of my father's. Balnespick was a clever man, very useful in the neighbourhood, respected by all ranks. He had married the beauty of Inverness, and was very proud of her. Her sister ran off from a Northern Meeting, which my father and aunt Mary attended, with a young subaltern of the regiment in garrison at Fort George, a crime quite excusable in *him*, for she was just as handsome a brunette as her sister was a lovely blonde; and the stolen wedding turned out, romance-like, quite a hit — the poor lieutenant was the heir of Rokeby. Balnespick's sister was married to William Cameron, the only remaining child of our dear old cousins at the Croft.

The great event of the Christmas time was the Floaters' ball. As the harvest-home belonged to the farm, this entertainment was given to the forest—all engaged in the wood manufacture, their wives and families, being invited. The amusements began pretty early in the day with a game at "ba," the hockey of the low country, our Scotch substitute for cricket. It is played on a field by two parties, who toss a small ball between them by means of crooked sticks called clubs. The Highlanders are extremely fond of this exciting game, and continue it for hours on a holiday, exhibiting during its progress many feats of agility. There were always crowds of spectators. Our people kept up the game till dark, when all the men—above a hundred—went to dinner in the barn, a beef and some sheep having been killed for them. The kitchens of both house and farm had been busy for a couple of days cooking for the entertainment. The women, as they arrived, were taken into the griever's house for tea, a delicate attention, fully appreciated. We delighted in the Floaters' ball, so large a party, so many strangers, some splendid dancers from Strathspey, the hay-loft, the straw-loft, and the upper floor of the threshing-mill all thrown open *en suite*; two sets of fiddlers playing, punch made in the washing-tubs, an illumination of tallow dips! It is surprising that the floors stood the pounding they got; the thumping noise of the many energetic feet could have been heard half a mile off. When a lad took a lass out to dance, he led her to her place in the reel and "pree'd her mou"—kissed her—before beginning, she holding up her face quite frankly to receive the customary salute, and he giving a good sounding smack when the lass was bonnie.

The number of people employed in the forest was great. At this winter season little could be done beyond felling the tree, lopping the branches, barking the log, while the weather remained open, before the frost set in. Most of this work indeed was done in the autumn, and was continued while practicable. This was not a severe winter, but it set in early. We had a deep fall

of snow, and then a degree of frost felt only among the mountains, putting a stop while it lasted to all labour. It was not unpleasant, for it was dry, and the sun shone brightly for the few hours of daylight, and after the first slap in the face on going out, sharp exercise made our walks very enjoyable. We bounded on over the hard ground for miles, indeed the distances people are able to walk in weather of this sort would not be believed by those who had not tried it. Five weeks of frost and snow brought us over the worst of the winter, and then came a foretaste of spring which set us all to work again. The spade and the plough were both busy, and in the wood the great bustle of the year began.

The logs prepared by the loppers had to be drawn by horses to the nearest running water, and there left in large quantities till the proper time for sending them down the streams. It was a busy scene all through the forest, so many rough little horses moving about in every direction, each dragging its load, attended by an active boy as guide and remover of obstructions. The smack of the whip used to sound quite cheerful in those otherwise solitary spots, and when we met, the few Gaelic words interchanged seemed to enliven us all. This driving lasted till sufficient timber was collected to render the opening of the sluices profitable. Formerly small saw-mills had been erected wherever there was sufficient water-power, near the part of the forest where the felling was going on, and the deals when cut were carted down to the Spey. It was picturesque to come suddenly out of the gloom of the pine-trees, on to a little patch of cultivation near a stream with a cottage or two, and a saw-mill at work, itself an object of interest in a rude landscape. A concentration of labour was, however, found to be more advantageous to the wood-merchant; they were finding out that it answered better to send the logs down nearer to the Spey by floating them, than the deals by carting them. The prettily-situated single saw-mills were therefore gradually abandoned, and new ones to hold double saws built as wanted, within a more convenient distance from the

banks of the river where the rafts were made. In order to have a run of water at command, the sources of the little rivers were managed artificially to suit floating purposes. Embankments were raised at the ends of the lakes in the far-away glens, at the point where the different burnies issued from them. Strong sluice-gates, always kept closed, prevented the escape of any but a small rill of water, so that when a rush was wanted the supply was sure.

The night before a run, the man in charge of that particular sluice set off up the hill, and reaching the spot long before daylight opened the heavy gates; out rushed the torrent, travelling so quickly as to reach the deposit of timber in time for the meeting of the woodmen, a perfect crowd, amongst whom it was one of our enjoyments to find ourselves early in the day. The duty of some was to roll the logs into the water; this was effected by the help of levers—like Harry Sandford's snowball, as Johnnie screamed out the first time we took him with us. The next party shoved them off with long poles into the current, dashing in often up to the middle in water when any case of obstruction occurred. They were then taken in charge by the most picturesque group of all, the youngest and most active, each supplied with a *clip*, a very long pole thin and flexible at one end, generally a young tall tree; a sharp hook was fixed to the bending point, and with this, skipping from rock to stump, over brooks and through briers, this agile band followed the log-laden current, ready to pounce on any stray lumbering victim that was in any manner checked in its progress. There was something graceful in the action of throwing forth the stout yet yielding clip, an exciting satisfaction as the sharp hook fixed the obstreperous log. The many light forms springing about among the trees, along banks that were sometimes high, and always rocky, the shouts, the laughter, the Gaelic exclamations, and above all, the roar of the water, made the whole scene one of the most inspiring that either actors or spectators could be engaged in.



THE FLOATERS.

One or two of these streams carried the wood straight to the Spey, others were checked in their progress by a loch; when this was the case, light rafts had to be constructed, and paddled or speared over by a man standing on each raft. The loch crossed, the raft was taken to pieces, some of the logs left at a saw-mill, the rest sent down the recovered stream to the Spey; there the Spey floaters took charge of them; our people's work was done.

The Spey floaters lived mostly down near Ballindalloch, a certain number of families by whom the calling had been followed for ages, to whom the wild river, all its holes and shoals and rocks and shiftings, were as well known as had its bed been dry. They came up in the season, at the first hint of a *spate*, as a rise in the water was called. A large bothy was built for them at the mouth of the Druie in a fashion that suited themselves; a fire on a stone hearth in the middle of the floor, a hole in the very centre of the roof just over it where some of the smoke got out, heather spread on the ground, no window, and there, after their hard day's work, they lay down for the night, in their wet clothes—for they had been perhaps hours in the river—each man's feet to the fire, each man's plaid round his chest, a circle of wearied bodies half-stupefied by whisky, enveloped in a cloud of steam and smoke, and sleeping soundly till the morning. They were a healthy race, suffering little except in their old age from rheumatism. They made their large rafts themselves, seldom taking help from our woodmen, yet often giving it if there were an over-quantity of timber in the runs.

Mr Macintosh, who often dined at the Doune, usually contrived to come the day before a log-run, our particular delight, so we were sure of appearing in the very height of the business before the noontide rest. When the men met in the morning they were supposed to have breakfasted at home, and perhaps had had their private dram, it being cold work in a dark wintry dawn, to start over the moor for a walk of some miles to end in standing up to the knees in water; yet on collecting,

whisky was always handed round; a lad with a small cask—a quarter anker—on his back, and a horn cup in his hand that held a gill, appeared three times a day among them. They all took their “morning” raw, undiluted and without accompaniment, so they did the gill at parting when the work was done; but the noon-tide dram was part of a meal. There was a twenty minutes’ rest from labour, and a bannock and a bit of cheese taken out of every pocket to be eaten leisurely with the whisky. When we were there the horn cup was offered first to us, and each of us took a sip to the health of our friends around us, who all stood up. Sometimes a floater’s wife or bairn would come with a message; such messenger was always offered whisky. Aunt Mary had a story that one day a woman with a child in her arms, and another bit thing at her knee, came up among them; the horn cup was duly handed to her, she took a “gey guid drap” herself, and then gave a little to each of the babies. “My goodness, child,” said my mother to the wee thing that was trotting by the mother’s side, “doesn’t it *bite* you?” “Ay, but I like the bite,” replied the creature.

There were many laughable accidents during the merry hours of the floating; clips would sometimes fail to hit the mark, when the overbalanced clipper would fall headlong into the water. A slippery log escaping would cause a tumble, shouts of laughter always greeting the dripping victims, who good-humouredly joined in the mirth. As for the wetting, it seemed in no way to incommode them; they were really like water-rats. Sometimes the accident was beyond a joke. I know we were all sobered by one that befell us. Just below the bridge on the Loch-an-Eilan road, over the burn that flows out of the loch, a small basin of water had been allowed to form during a run, for the purpose of holding together a large quantity of logs to prevent them from going down too quickly, as from this point the stream was conveyed by a narrow conduit of wood, across the Milltown muir, on down a steep bank into the first of

a set of miniature lochs, concealed by the birch wood on one side and the fir trees on the other, known as the Lochans. This conduit, called the Spout, was in particular favour with us, as along its course the fun was always at its height, it was so difficult in that rush of water to keep the great hulking logs in order, and send them singly on in regular succession. One would rise up here over a lazy leader, another there; above, two or three would mount up on end and choke the passage, stopping all progress and wasting the water. The clips were busy here, the men jumping about hooking this log and sending it forward, hooking that log and keeping it back, screaming to each other as they skipped over the Spout.

All of a sudden, Mary, not in general an active child nor given to exertion of any kind, made a spring and cleared the conduit. The shouts of applause which greeted this daring action inspired her afresh, and laughing she prepared to spring back. This time she miscalculated the distance and fell plump into the stream, along which she was carried more rapidly than we could follow her. Did she escape being crushed by the logs she must have been drowned in that rushing torrent before being tossed down the steep bank into the loch.

The presence of mind of one person often saves a life; to save Mary's it required the presence of mind of two.

A tall Murdoch Murray stood by a narrow outlet with his clip. He had the wisdom to draw one log quite across the mouth of the outlet so that none could move, and thus all danger of her being followed by one and so crushed was at an end. A lad, whose name I forget—he died, poor fellow, of consumption, carefully tended by us all while he lived—leaped from his place, waited for her a little lower down, seized her clothes, and dragged her out. She was insensible. Mr Macintosh then came up, carried her into a saw-miller's house close by—it was Sandy Colley's—had her undressed, rubbed, laid in the bed wrapped in warm

blankets, and when she opened her eyes gave her a glass of whisky. Jane, as the sensible one of the party, was sent home to order up dry clothes, without going near my mother. Johnnie and I sat by Mary, doing whatever Duncan Macintosh told us, and Miss Elphick cried.

As soon as it was known that the "*bonny burd*" was living, grand cheering rent the air, and a dram all round, an extra, was given in honour of her rescuers. That dram was the Highland prayer, it began, accompanied, and ended all things. The men wanted to make a king's cushion and carry her home, but Mr Macintosh thought it better for her to walk. We were abundantly cheered on setting forth, and well scolded on getting home, though none of us but poor little Mary herself had any hand in the accident.

A more tragical event than most happily this "vaulting ambition" of poor Mary's had turned out, had occurred a year or two before at this same season. The only child of a poor widow, Christian Grant, a fine young man named Allan, had charge of the Loch Ennich sluice-gates. A quantity of timber being wanted at Druie mouth for the Spey floaters who had come up to make their rafts, a run was determined on, and this lad was sent up to the Glen to open the sluice. It was a wild night, wind and hail changing to snow, and he had eleven or twelve miles to go through the forest, full of paths, and across the heath that was trackless. Poor old Christy! she gave him a hot supper, put up a bannock and a little whisky for him, and wrapped his plaid well round him. She looked after him as he left the house in the driving sleet; such risks were common, no one thought about them. Early in the morning down came the water, the weather had taken up, and the floating went merrily on, but Allan did not return. He had reached the loch, that was plain; where then had he wandered? Not far. When evening came on and no word of him, a party set out in search, and they found him at his post, asleep seemingly, a bit of bannock and the empty flask beside

him. He had done his duty, opened the water-gate, and then sat down to rest. The whisky and the storm told the remainder. He was quite dead.

The mother never recovered her reason; the shock brought on brain fever, and that left her strangely excited for a while. Afterwards she calmed, was always harmless, sometimes restless, but never either wiser or sillier than the half-simple state in which she existed to extreme old age. She had always been a tidy body, and had been called in often by Betty Campbell to help at the farm when there was a press of business. Once or twice at company times she had assisted in the scullery at the House.

The first sensible action she did after her long months of darkness was to arrive at the Doune one morning and set herself to pluck the fowl. Of course every one was kind to her, so she came the next day, and from that time never failed to arrive regularly when the family was at home, about the breakfast hour, and remain until after dinner when the kitchen was put in order. She would never stay all night, preferring her little cabin on Druie side, to which she returned cheerfully except on stormy nights, when the maids said she would shake her head sadly, and sometimes let fall tears. She never mentioned her son.

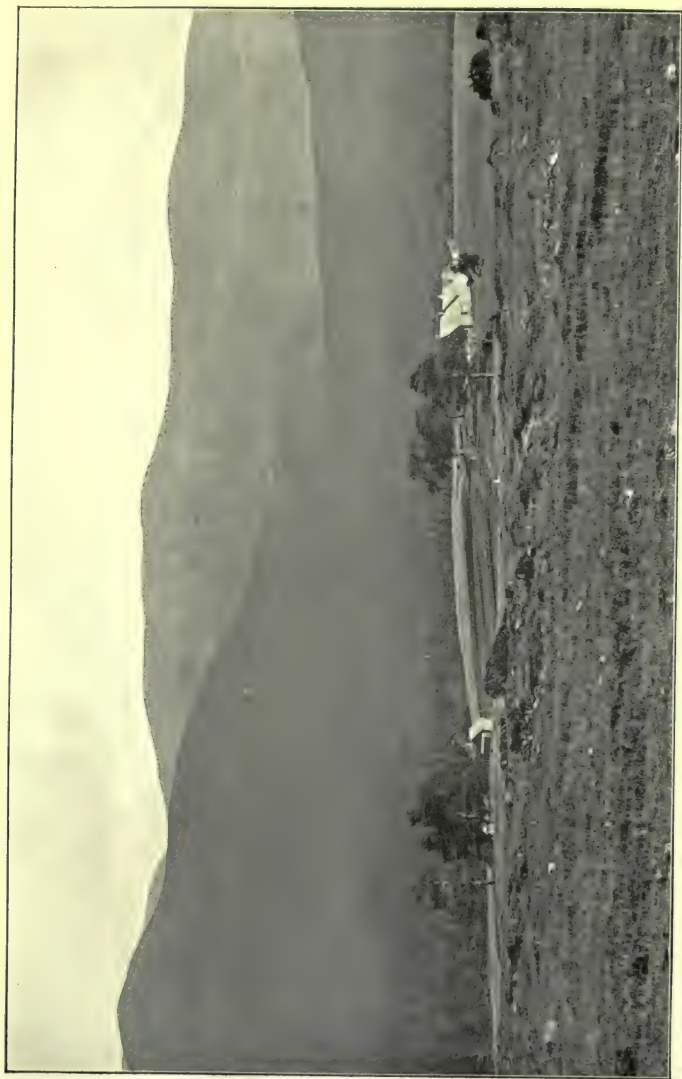
My mother did not let her want for anything; clothes, tea, snuff, all she wished for was supplied whether we were at home or absent, till the good-hearted Duchess of Bedford succeeded us at the Doune, when she took charge of Christy, gave her just what she had been accustomed to, and reinstated her as head of the scullery. I can see her now, with her pale anxious face, her linsey gown, check apron, and white cap bound by a black ribbon, seated beside the old japanned clock in our cheerful kitchen, at some of her easy work. She had very little English, just enough to say "my dear" or "my jewel" when any of us children passed. She always rose when my mother entered and kissed her hand, sometimes saying "bonnie" when she saw how white it was. Poor

old Christy! We used to work for her, helping the maids to make her caps and aprons and handkerchiefs. It was Johnnie's privilege to carry to her the week's supply of snuff.

After this misfortune the men were sent up the hill in pairs, for it had not come alone. The shepherds had their mournful tales to tell as well as the floaters, and here is one of them.

The young people of whom I have to speak were not of Rothiemurchus. They lived up in Glen Feshie, a great way from our march, and they had not long been married. He was either a small farmer, or the son of one, or merely shepherd to a more wealthy man, I am not sure which, but his business was to mind a large flock that pastured on the mountains. During the summer when their charge strayed up towards the very summit of the high range of the Grampians, the shepherds lived in bothies on the hill, miles from any other habitation, often quite alone, their collie dog their only companion, and with no provisions beyond a bag of meal. This they generally ate uncooked, mixed with either milk or water as happened to suit, the milk or water being mostly cold, few of these hardy mountaineers troubling themselves to keep a fire lighted in fine weather. This simple food, called *brose*, is rather relished by the Highlanders; made with hot water or with good milk they think it excellent fare; made with beef *broo*—the fat skimmings of the broth pot—it is considered quite a treat. Beef brose is entertainment for any one. The water-brose must be wholesome; no men looked better in health than the masons, who ate it regularly, and the shepherds. These last came down from their high ground to attend the kirk sometimes, in such looks as put to shame the luxurious dwellers in the smoky huts with their hot porridge and other delicacies.

In the winter the flocks feed lower down, and the shepherd leaves his bothy to live at home, but not at ease. A deep snow calls him forth to wander over miles of dreary waste, in case of drifts that overwhelm,



BRAE RIACH.

[To face page 228.]

or cold that paralyses. In spring there come the early lambs, on whose safety depends the profit of the sheep-owner, and our Highland springs retain so much of winter in them that the care of a flock at this harsh season entails about the hardest of all lives on labouring men.

It was at this critical time, at the beginning of a heavy snowstorm, that our young husband departed on his round of duty.

The wife was preparing for her first baby; she was also busy with her wheel, the first work of a newly-married notable Highland girl being the spinning and the dyeing of a plaid for her husband. She baked the bread, she trimmed her fire, and she busked her house, then took her wheel, and by the light of a splinter of quick fir laid on a small projecting slab within the chimney, she wore away the long dark hours of that dreary winter's night. Ever as the storm lulled for a while, she bent to listen for the voice she expected at the door, which, poor young thing, she was never to hear again, for he never returned from those wild mountains. They sought him for days; no trace of him could be discovered.

When the snow melted, and the summer flowers burst into bloom, party after party set out in quest of his remains, all unsuccessfully. It was not till late in autumn, when our gamekeeper was on the Brae-Riach shooting grouse, that he saw on a shelf of rock midway down a precipice a plaided figure. It was all that was left of the missing shepherd, and his collie lay dead beside him. Deceived by the snow he had wandered miles away from his own ground, and must have died from exhaustion after a fall on to this sheltered spot.

His widow was past all knowledge of his fate; her anxiety had brought on premature childbirth, fever ensued, and though she recovered her strength, her mind was gone. She lived in the belief of the speedy return of her husband, went cheerfully about her usual work, preparing things for him, going through the same routine as on the day she lost him; baking, sweeping,

putting on fresh peats, and ending with her wheel by the side of the clean hearth in the evening. She would show her balls of yarn with pride to the kind neighbours who looked in upon her, and the little caps she was trimming for the baby that was lying alongside the bones of its father in the kirkyard.

Sometimes in the evening, they said, she would look wearily round and sigh heavily, and wander a little in her talk, but in the morning she was early up and busy as ever. She was never in want, for every one helped her; but though she was so much pitied, she was in their sober way much blamed. The Highlanders are fatalists; what is to be, must be; what happens must be borne patiently. We must "dree our weird," all of us, and 'tis "a flying in the face of Providence" to break the heart for God's inflictions. They feel keenly too; all their affections are warm and deep; still, they are not to be paraded. A tranquil manner is a part of their breeding, composure under all circumstances essential to the dignity of character common to all the race. How would a matron from Speyside be astonished, scandalised, at the impulsive nature and consequent exhibitions of her reputed kindred in dear Ireland!

I have wandered very far away from the floating. The forest work did not end with the arrival of the logs at their different destinations. Those that went straight to Spey were seized on by the Ballindalloch men, bored at each end by an auger, two deep holes made into which iron plugs were hammered, the plugs having eyes through which well-twisted wattles were passed, thus binding any given number together. When a raft of proper size was thus formed it lay by the bank of the river awaiting its covering; this was produced from the logs left at the saw-mills, generally in the water in a pool formed to hold them. As they were required by the workmen, they were brought close by means of the clip, and then by the help of levers rolled up an inclined plane and on to the platform under the saw; two hooks attached to cables

kept the log in its place, the sluice was then opened, down poured the water, the great wheel turned, the platform moved slowly on with the log, the saw-frame worked up and down, every cut slicing the log deeper till the whole length fell off. The four outsides were cut off first ; they were called "backs," and very few of them went down to Garmouth ; they were mostly used at home for country purposes, such as fencing, out-offices, roofing, or firing ; out-houses even were made of them. The squared logs were then cut up regularly into deals and carted off to the rafts, where they were laid as a sort of flooring. Two rude gears for the oars completed the appointments of a Spey float. The men had a wet berth of it, the water shipping in, or, more properly, over, at every lurch ; yet they liked the life, and it paid them well. Then they had idle times great part of the year, could live at home and till their little crofts in their own lazy way, the rent being made up by the floating.

Near Arndilly there was a sunken rock difficult sometimes to pass ; this furnished a means of livelihood to several families living on the spot. It was their privilege to provide ropes, and arms to pull the ropes, and so to help the floats through a rapid current running at high floods between this sunken rock and the shore. The dole they got was small, yet there was hardly more outcry raised in Sutherland when the Duke wanted his starving cottars to leave their turf huts on the moors and live in comfortable stone houses by the sea, than my father met when some years later he got leave to remove this obstacle by blasting.

The oars were to my mother the most important items of the whole manufacture. She had discovered that in the late Laird's time, when the sales of timber were very small—a dozen of rafts in each season, worth a few hundreds annually—the oars had been the perquisite of the Lady. A little out of fun, partly because she had begun to want money sometimes, she informed good Mr Steenson that she meant to claim her dues. He used to listen quietly, and answer

blandly that next time he came up her claims should be remembered, but never a penny she got.

Mr Steenson fell ill and died. A new wood-agent had to be appointed, and he being an old friend, my mother applied to him with more confidence. This new agent was Dalachapple, Mr Alexander Grant of Dalachapple, nephew to the thrifty wife of Parson John. He not only listened to my mother about the oar money, but he acted in accordance with the old usage, and with a delicacy quite amusing. In a mysterious manner, and only when she was alone, did he approach her with her perquisite in the form of a bank-note folded small. The oars were sold for half-a-crown apiece, a pair to each float, and one season he gave her upwards of forty pounds; this was long before the great felling. She opened her eyes wide, and certainly found the money a great comfort, though it was of little use in the Highlands; all we did not produce ourselves was ordered in large quantities on credit and paid for by drafts on a banker. We had no shops near us but one at Inverdrue, kept by a Jenny Grant, who made us pay very dear for thread and sugar-plums. Our charities were given in the form of meal or clothing; fuel every one had in plenty for the mere gathering, the loppings all through the forest were turned to no other account. They made a brilliant fire when well dried, owing to the quantity of turpentine in the fir timber; still, those who could afford it laid in a stock of peats for the winter.

My father had an objection to peat, and would not burn it up at the house even in the kitchen. Coals were not thought of; they could be had no nearer than Inverness, were dear enough there, and the carriage thence—thirty-six miles—would have made them very expensive; yet the wood fires were very costly; the wood itself was of no value, but it had to be carted home, cross-cut by two men, split up by two more, and then packed in the wood-sheds. It was never-ending work, and must have been very costly when we lived the year round at the Doune. In the huge kitchen grate, in the long grates with dogs in them made

expressly for the purpose of supporting the billets, the cheerful wood fires were delightful ; but in our part of the house, where my mother in her English tidiness had done away with the open hearth and condemned us to small Bath grates, we were really perished with cold ; three or four sticks set on end, all that the small space would hold, either smouldering slowly if wet, or blazing up to the danger of the chimney if dry, gave out no heat equal to warm the frozen fingers and toes during a Highland winter. We held a council in the school-room and decided on taking steps to make ourselves more comfortable.

On returning from our walks we visited the farm offices, and there from the famous peat-stacks provided for the farm-servants we helped ourselves, each possessing herself of as much as she could carry. We got old John Mackintosh to chop our long billets in two, and thus we contrived a much better fire ; the grate was not suitable, but we made the best of it.

When we told our dear old great-grand-uncle of our bright thought, he started up, angry, but not with *us* ; and forthwith sent down for special schoolroom use two carts of the fine hard peats from the far-off famous Rhinrui Moss ; they burned almost like coal, having but one fault, very light red ashes. We made some dusters, enjoyed our fires, and had to keep good watch over our store of fuel to prevent any from being stolen by the kitchen, never failing daily to take an accurate measurement of our own peat-stack, built neatly by the Captain's men in one of the wood-houses. And so our winter glided away.

In the spring, as soon as the hill was open, my father went to London to attend his duties in Parliament. My mother then changed our arrangements a little. We did not get up till seven, dark of course at first, but a whole hour gained on a cold morning was something. Miss Elphick, Jane, and I breakfasted with her at half-past nine. We used to hear her go downstairs punctually ten minutes sooner, opening her

bedroom door at the end of the passage with a deal of noise, and then making a resounding use of her pocket-handkerchief—our signal call, we said.

We all dined with her at four o'clock. After that there were no more lessons; we passed the evening beside her reading and working. The work was the usual shirting, sheeting, towelling, etc., required in the family, the stock of linen of all kinds being kept up to the statutory number by a regular yearly addition; the whole was then looked over, some mended to serve a time, some made up for the poor, the rest sorted into rag-bundles constantly wanted where accidents among the labourers were frequent.

We read through all Miss Edgeworth's works, Goldsmith's histories, most of the *Spectator*, and a few good standard novels from the dusty shelves in the study.

On Saturday nights we were allowed a fire in the barrack-room, after which indulgence my hair was admitted to shine more brightly! After dinner, in an hour we had to ourselves, Jane and I generally read to the "little ones." Mary was hammering through Parent's Assistant herself, two pages a day for her lesson, enough as she slowly spelt her way along the lines, but not enough to interest her in the stories, so she was pleased to hear them to an end with Johnnie. We often had to repeat a favourite tale, so much approved were *Lazy Laurence*, *The Little Merchants*, *The Basket Woman*, and others. When we demurred to going over them again we were so assailed by our listeners that we began *Evenings at Home*, leaving out "the Tutor, George, and Harry." What excellent books for children! Yet it was not while I was young that I was fully aware of the value of the library chosen for us. It was when I was again reading these old favourites to childish listeners—to you, my own dear children—that the full extent of their influence struck me so forcibly. They have not been surpassed by any of our numerous later authors for the young.

This was a very happy time for us, even though William was away. We saw him only at midsummer, the journey being too long for his Christmas holidays to be spent with us; he spent them always with the Freres.

One April morning Grace Grant, the *greusiach's* daughter, the pretty girl who waited on us, drew aside the white curtains of my little bed and announced that Mr Cameron's two houses were in ashes. A fire had broken out in the night at the Croft in the new house occupied by Mr and Mrs William Cameron; it had spread to the stack-yard and offices, and even to the upper house in which the old people lived, and when my mother reached the scene—for she had been roused by the news, had got up, dressed, and walked off those two or three miles, she who seldom went farther than her poultry-yard—she found the homeless party on the green watching the destruction of their property. About half of this news was true; the fire had broken out and the lower house was burnt to the ground, some of the corn-stacks were destroyed, and one young horse was injured, but the rest of the stock and the better part of the crop and the old cottage were safe. My mother *had* gone up, but before her bedtime, the tidings having been brought to her while she was reading as usual after we had left her, and she brought back with her the two eldest of William Cameron's sons, who lived with us for the next eighteen months, there being no room for them at home.

The loss to their parents was great; all the handsome Glasgow furniture was gone, as well as sundry little valuables saved by poor Mrs Cameron from the wreck of her city splendour. It was melancholy to see the blackened ruins of that little lovely spot; much of the offices had fallen, and the heaps of scorched timber and broken walls we had to pick our way through on our first visit made us feel very sad. The old people received us as if nothing had happened. Miss Mary was neither more nor less fussy, more nor less cross than usual. Mrs Cameron sat in her chair by

the fire in her bonnet and shawl, and with her green shade over her eyes just as she had ever done; a monument of patience in idleness, sighing in her accustomed manner, no change whatever in her. I am certain she had been equally immovable on the night of the fire. Mr Cameron talked to us cheerfully of all matters going, the fire among the rest, as if he and his had no particular concern in it, except when he raised his fine head to the sky in humble gratitude that there had been no lives lost; he even played the Jew's harp to us; "Lochaber," which we called his own tune, for he came from that part of the country, and "Crochallan," beautiful "Crochallan," which we considered more peculiarly our own, for we had all been sung to sleep by it in our infancy. I had learned from Mr Cameron to pronounce the Gaelic words with the pretty, soft Lochaber accent, so different from the harsh, guttural Strathspey. Years after at Hampstead, my uncle Frere, who remembered my childish crooning of it when he had his fever, made me sing it again not once, but for ever; and one day that Francis Cramer was there my uncle made me sing it to him; never was musician more delighted; over and over again was it repeated till he had quite caught this lovely Gaelic air, and when he went away he bade me farewell as "Crochallan Mavourgne," little suspecting he was addressing a young lady as the favourite cow of one Allan!

My father, immediately on his return from London, began to plan the present pretty two-storeyed cottage, as I may well remember, for I had to make all the drawings for it architecturally from his given dimensions; inside and outside working plans, and then a sketch of its future appearance in the landscape. I was so unskilful, so awkward, and he was so very particular, required all to be so neatly done, so accurate and without blemish of any sort, that I could not tell how many sheets of paper, how many hours of time, how many trials of temper were gone through before the finished specimens were left to be tied up with other

equally valuable designs, in a roll kept in the lower closed book-shelves to the left of the library fireplace, docketed by his saucy daughter "Nonsense of Papa's."

The new house was placed a little in advance of the old in a situation very well chosen. It looks particularly well from aunt Mary's favourite walk round the Lochans. My father cut down some trees at one point to give a full view of it, and we made a rough seat there, as we did in many a pretty spot besides, where a summer hour could be dreamed away by lake, or stream, or bank, or brae, and mountain boundary, the birch leaves and the heather scenting the air.

They were stupid boys those sons of William Cameron. James, the elder, was a real lout, there was no making anything of him, though Caroline the French girl, true to the coquettish instincts of her nation, tried all her fascinations on him, really toiled to elicit a single spark of feeling from this perfect log; in vain. Jane was more successful with the second boy, Lachlan. Both brothers went daily to the school at the bridge of Coylam, the common parish school, and a very good one, where all the boys in the place were taught, and could learn Latin if they wished. The present master piqued himself on his English. He came from Aberdeen, and was great in the English classics; whole pages from our best poets, first read out by him and then learnt by heart by the pupils, formed part of the daily lessons of the more advanced classes. Lachlan Cameron, taught privately by Jane, quite electrified the master by his fine delivery of the *Deserted Village* at the rehearsal previous to the examination.

My father examined the school; I don't know what there was my father did not do; so busy a man could hardly have been met with. He did his work well while the whim lasted for that particular employment; the misfortune was that there were too many irons in the fire; fewer of them he would have managed perfectly. Poor Sir Alexander Boswell, Bozzy's clever son, wrote a brilliant Tory squib once

ridiculing the Edinburgh Whigs, and my father's share of it ended thus—"Laird, lawyer, statesman, J. P. Grant in *short*."

We always went with my father and mother to the examination of the school—no short business; my father was methodical, no flash pupil could have imposed on him. Backwards and forwards he cross-examined, requiring the reasons for all things, much as is the National system now, but as was not practised then. I have heard him say the boys were fair scholars, but beaten by the girls. The Latin class was respectable, the arithmetic very creditable, the recitations had of course to be applauded, and Lachlan Cameron was rewarded for action as well as emphasis—Jane having *John Kembled* him to the utmost of her ability—by receiving a handsome copy of Goldsmith's works.

The prizes were wisely chosen, indeed almost any standard work would have been appreciated. Mrs Gillies, during a visit to us at the circuit time, taking a walk with my mother one morning, went to rest a bit in a saw-mill; the saw was at work grinding slowly up and down, while the log it was slitting moved lazily on, the man and boy reading till they were wanted. The boy's book was Cornelius Nepos in the original, the man's Turner's Geography.

These forensic displays of Lachlan had turned our thoughts back to our nearly forgotten theatricals. We amused ourselves in the shrubbery re-acting several of our favourite scenes in Macbeth. My father coming upon us one day proposed that, as we were so well acquainted with Shakespeare in tragedy, we should try his comedy, and if we liked he would prepare for us his own favourite *As You Like It*. We were delighted. He set to work, and leaving out objectionable passages and unnecessary scenes, made the prettiest three-act drama of this pretty play. We learned our parts out among the birch-wooding on the Ord Bain, selecting for our stage, when we had made progress enough to arrive at rehearsals, a beautiful spot upon a shoulder of the hill not far from Kinapol, about a couple of miles from

the Doune, so that we had a good walk to it all along the river-side, through the planting.

Still, though charmed with Rosalind and Celia, we could not bear giving up our older friends; we therefore persuaded my father to curtail Macbeth, and allow us to act both, before him and a select audience, as soon as William should come home; we could not have got on without him, he and Jane being our stars. Little fat Miss Elphick, too, must play her part; she had gradually abandoned the strict disciplinarian style, and had become in many respects as latitudinarian as her Celtic-nurtured pupils could desire. In this case, moreover, personal vanity had a large share in her gracious demeanour; she imagined herself handsome, graceful, and an actress—Mrs Jordan beautified! and from having heard *her* read she had caught, my mother said, some of the tone of that wonderful woman's style.

The part she chose in *As You Like It* was Rosalind, and a vulgar Rosalind she made, exaggerating the very points an elegant mind would have softened, for Rosalind is somewhat more pert than even a "saucy lacquey" need have been, a little forward, and not over delicate. Mrs Harry Siddons refined her into the most exquisite piece of gay impulsive womanhood, a very Princess of romance. Poor Miss Elphick brought her up from the servants' hall. We thought her queer-looking in her doublet and hose, but Belleville, who was a good judge of such matters, declared that she was finely limbed, had a leg fit for the buskin, with an eye and a voice that might have made her fortune had she followed the profession. She was very much pleased with herself, took a deal of trouble about her dress and her hair—a crop—and the placing of her hat and feather, and she knew her part perfectly.

Jane was a gentlemanly Orlando, William a first-rate Jaques; he looked the character and felt it, for in his young days William was cynical, turned his nose up habitually, very different from his later pleased tranquillity. I did both the Duke and Celia, was a stiff Duke and a lively Celia; we gave her no lover, left out

all that. But *the* actor in this pretty comedy was Mary—dull, listless Mary; she chose the part herself, and would have no other, and anything better than her Touchstone my father and Belleville declared they had never seen; her humour, her voice, her manner, her respectful fun to her ladies, her loving patronage of Audrey (Anne Cameron), the whole conception of the character was marvellous in a child of ten years of age; and she broke upon us suddenly, for at all our rehearsals she had been stupid. She had acted like a lump of lead, she never knew her part, every other word she was prompted, and when my father tried to put some life into her by reading to her as he wished her to speak, he made little of it; but on the night of the play her acting was perfect. Johnnie said it was the port wine, a large jug of which mixed with water stood in our green-room (the upper part of the thrashing-mill), and was dispensed in proper quantities by Miss Elphick between the acts. Johnnie affirmed that of this jug Touchstone had more than his share, as he, in his capacity of third lord attending on the forest Duke, had opportunities of discovering during his retirement behind the fanners, as he was seldom required on the stage. The other lords were represented by Jane Macintosh, James and Lachlan Cameron, and Caroline; by the help of caps and feathers and long boar-spears they grouped remarkably well.

We grew so fond of our comedy, Macbeth was less thought of. We acted it first, Jane and William surpassing themselves. Mary was Banquo, Miss Elphick the king, Mary was Hecate, and the witches and the company at the banquet were the same as did the forest lords, for we had each to play many parts. They were obliged to make me Lady Macbeth, a part I don't think it possible I could have done well, though my father took infinite pains with me. They said I looked handsome in black velvet and point lace—a dress the real Lady Macbeth would have opened her eyes at. The people called out "briach, briach" (pronounced bre-ach) when, thus arrayed and with a long train, the



JOHNNIE (LADY STRACHEY'S FATHER).



MARY.

Thane's wife came forward with her letter ; a gratifying sound to me, who had been thought always the plain one of the family ; even Grace Baillie, the most obliging creature in the world, could only force herself to say, when contemplating the pale thin object presented to her, " Eliza will be very lady-like !"

I was vain of my *briach* (bonnie), and our Highlanders were good judges of both beauty and merit ; they were charmed with William's Macduff and applauded him vehemently, many of the women bursting into tears ; Jenny Dairy soaked her apron through "to see puir Mr William greeting for his wife and family." We had a large audience. All our particular friends, Belleville, Mrs and Miss Macpherson, Camerons from the Croft, Macintoshes from the Dell, and Mr Alexander Grant from Garmouth ; these were the select, on the front benches ; at the back were John and Betty Campbell from the Dell of Killiehuntly up in Badenoch—the farm they had taken on leaving our service—Mackenzie and Mrs Mackenzie, once Mrs Lynch, from their inn at Aviemore, and all our own servants. Our theatre was part of the granary, decorated by ourselves with old carpets and curtains, green boughs, and plenty of candles. We made our own dresses, Anne Cameron and Jane Macintosh assisting ; and, as the old black trunk in the long garret was made over to us, we had my grandmother's blue and silver, and yellow satin, and flowered silks, and heaps of embroidered waistcoats, scarfs and handkerchiefs, all of which were turned to account. One peculiarity of this acting was that we became so attached to the characters we could not bear to think ill of them. We excused everybody for every act, with the exception of Lady Macbeth ; we could in no way get her out of the scrape of the murder, till we stumbled in Holinshed's Chronicles on the story as told in his times. Even then we could not approve of her, but judging of her by the morals of her age, we almost justified her for getting rid of a wicked cruel king, whose conduct to her and hers had been so ferocious. We forgot we were only shifting the saddle.

We were like the biographers who become so enamoured of their subjects that they can never see their faults. We had also to make out the locality of the forest of Arden, and we settled it to our perfect satisfaction near Hainault; the principality or duchy from which the two Dukes came eluded our researches.

The next stirring event was another alteration—a final one it proved—of the principal staircase, the painting and papering of the new part of the house, and the fitting up of the drawing-room as a library. We had lived so long with doors and shutters of plain deal, cane-backed chairs and sofas, common Scotch carpeting, etc., that the chilly air of our half-furnished apartments never struck us as requiring improvement. My mother had long wished for more comfort around her, and the books having accumulated quite beyond the study shelves my father determined on removing them; he gave himself great credit for his taste in the choice of his bookcases; they were made of the fir from his forest, picked pieces of course, highly varnished and relieved by black mouldings. The room was large and lofty, and really looked well when finished, but it was a work of time. All summer and all autumn and part of the winter the various jobs were going on, and in the middle of the bustle we caught the measles, one after the other, we four who had hitherto escaped—and no doctor in the country! Tall Mr Stewart from Grantown, eighteen miles off, who used to attend every one on Speyside, was dead. He was a retired army surgeon who had settled in Strathspey on the chance of practice, skilful enough for ordinary cases in his line, medical aid being little wanted. Herbs and such simples cured the generality, and we had my grandfather's medicine chest administered sagaciously by my father. He did not like undertaking the measles, then considered a serious complaint, so he sent to Inverness for Doctor Ponton. He paid two very expensive visits, and we all got well.

Just at this time there appeared in the village of

Kingussie a miserable-looking man in a well-worn tartan jacket, with a handsome wife, somewhat older than himself, and several children. They arrived from Lochaber in an old gig, a small cart following with luggage and a short supply of furniture; they hired the room over Peter Macpherson's new shop. This man announced himself as Dr Smith, brother to a clever man of the same name near Fort William. He had been some weeks there, creeping into a little practice among the neighbours, before we heard of him.

A poor woman in Rothiemurchus had died for want of skilful aid; the woman employed on these occasions had not been equal to the circumstances. This unhappy event decided my father to look out for a doctor, and he went to consult Belleville about it. An inquiry had been held into the causes of the accident, and Dr Smith had been brought forward to give his professional testimony; his intelligence, his general information, astonished them; here was the very man they wanted. Accordingly it was resolved to try him for a year. The Marquis of Huntly, the Duke of Gordon, and Ballindalloch were written to. Poor Balnespick was away; he had gone to Cheltenham, where he died. The regular subscription for the care of the poor being immediately provided, this clever man was relieved from the fear of starvation, and had the hope besides of cases among the richer classes that would pay him better. He began with us, for we all took ill again, an illness no one could understand; all the symptoms of measles, and measles we had just recovered from; yet measles it was. Mary and I had it very severely; her cough, with winter approaching, gave great anxiety. Dr Ponton was again sent for, but his grave pomposity suggested no change from Dr Smith's treatment, so with another heavy fee he took leave of us.

After the measles Dr Smith appeared no more in the old tartan jacket, and though he still preferred walking to any other exercise—twenty or even thirty miles a day being a common thing with him—he looked neither so pale nor so thin as when he had first shown

himself at the inquest. He was *quick at the uptake*, fond of reading, a good listener, and a pleasant talker. Even Belleville's well-stored memory seldom found a quotation thrown away.

When my father had set all his various hands to work—Donald Maclean and his half-dozen men to the staircase, a cabinetmaker and his assistants from Perth to the new library, Grant the painter from Elgin with his men to their papering and oil-brushes—he set off himself to be re-elected for Great Grimsby, a dissolution of Parliament having made this necessary. An immensity of money was spent on this occasion, another candidate having started, the rich Mr Fazakerly ; out of four two only could succeed, and my unfortunate father was one of them.

My mother had had all the bedrooms in the new part of the house painted and papered to please herself. In the old part she had painted, but had not ventured on papering, the old walls not having been studded ; they were therefore done in distemper, as were those of the dining-room. The colours were not happily chosen, buff and grey, and the dining-room pea-green ; all the woodwork white, very cold-looking. The dining-room was relieved by the Thorley pictures, mostly by Dutch or Flemish artists, a small well-chosen selection. There was a Berghem, two Boths, a Watteau, a Jan Stein, a small Wouvermann, and several more undoubted originals, though by painters of less note. One *we* admired was one of the three authorised copies of Raphael's "Giardiniera"—the Virgin and Child and little dark St John—made by a favourite pupil. Castle Howard has another, Russborough claims the third. The subject, however, was so in favour that many pencils were tried on it, each possessor claiming of course to hold one of the three valuables. There were two coloured chalk sketches by Rembrandt of himself and a friend ; a piece of fruit, fish, and game considered very fine ;—in all about fifteen paintings, including two nearly full-length portraits, a Raper ancestor and his



THE SPRECKLED LAIRD.

friend Sir Christopher Wren. A court beauty by Sir Peter Lely was sent up to a bedroom, she was not dressed enough to be downstairs; and a James the Sixth style sort of man was promoted to the library, the only picture allowed in the room. A few old landscapes, not so well preserved, were hung about in the bedrooms. One portrait, unframed, in bad preservation, always riveted my attention; we called it the dying nun, because of the style of the accessories. It must, I think, have been the work of no pretender, whether his name be known to fame or not.

Our Grant ancestors were spread over the walls of the staircase: the Spreckled Laird and some of his family, himself in armour, his brother Corroun in ditto, his wife the Lady Jean in a very low-cut red velvet gown, with her yellow hair flowing over her shoulders, their little boys, my uncle Rothie and one who died young, of whom my brother Johnnie was the image, in court-like suits, holding out birds and nosegays; Lord Elchies in his ermine, and some others unknown. They made a better show after they were framed by my brother John when he was home on leave from India.

The library was long in being completed; there was a good deal of work in the bookcases, as they entirely surrounded the room. My mother had made the upstairs drawing-room so pretty, and the view from its windows was so very beautiful, that no one entering it could wish for any other; it looked up the Spey to the Quaich range of mountains, Tor Alvie on the one hand, the Ord Bain on the other, and the broom island, now a pretty lawn covered with sheep, just in front between us and the river. The grand pianoforte was there, and the harp and a writing-table, the fireplace filled with balsams, other plants in the small light closets opening out of the room, and sofas and chairs in plenty. Angelica Kaufmann's prints were pinned on the walls. Altogether it was cheerful and summery, and many a pleasant hour was spent in this pretty apartment.

Amongst other visitors there came Tom Lauder and his friend, henceforward our dear friend, Dr Gordon;

my father and mother had known him before, but to us young people he was a stranger. He was hardly handsome, and yet all his friends thought him so; not very tall, slight, fair; it was the expression of his countenance that was charming, and his manner, so gay, so simple, so attractive. He was very clever, had made his own way and was getting on rapidly. He had married, not well, I think, though he was happy, and it had been a long attachment. It was a bad connection, and she, to my mind, was not an agreeable woman—dawdling, untidy, grave. She was very useful to him, having a good head for languages.

Two results followed our new friendship. Dr Gordon explained to my father the evil of our early rising and late breakfasting; he assured him also that those stomachs that disliked milk, milk was not good for; the consequence was that we went back in rising to my mother's hour of seven, and that I had orders to make breakfast every morning at nine, and Mary partook of it; Caroline preferred joining James Cameron, Lachlan, and Johnnie, who all throve on porridge or bread and milk.

The other result was that William, who was now fifteen, was to return no more to Eton. He was to remain at home till the College met in Edinburgh in October, when Dr Gordon consented to take charge of him. Great rejoicings followed this decision; the south of England was so far away, letters were so long on the road; and though we had franks at command, so could write as often as we pleased, that did not lessen the distance, for the post used to go round by Aberdeen to Inverness and on to Grantown by a runner, where another runner received our bag and brought it three times a week to the Doune.

This summer a great improvement took place in our postal arrangements; a stage-coach was started to run three days a week between Perth and Inverness. Our bag was made up at Perth and dropped at Lynwilg at Robbie Cumming's, whose little shop soon became a receiving-house for more bags than ours. It was quite

an event ; we used to listen for the horn ; on still days and when the wind set that way we could hear it distinctly, as we walked on the flow-dyke round the farm. At one or two breaks in the wooding we could see the coach, a novel sight that made us clap our hands, and set poor Miss Elphick crying. She took to walking in that direction, it was so gay, so like what she remembered.

The bridge of Alvie was passed by the new coach at about five o'clock, and we had to hurry home to dress for dinner. During the second course, or later on a bad evening, the boy sent for the bag returned ; the butler brought it in and delivered the contents. One evening late in autumn it came ; Miss Elphick and I dined downstairs now, and we were all sitting round the fire on which fresh logs had been thrown, the dessert and wine were on the horse-shoe table, when the bag came in. Such startling news ! the Dutch revolt, the signal for rousing Europe ! There had been a dearth of warlike news after the Spanish campaigns were over, and this unexpected turn of affairs in Holland excited every one. How eagerly the papers were watched for many a day after.

I do not recollect any other matter of importance happening during the remainder of this year. Lord Huntly and a set of grouse-shooting friends came to Kinrara, but we did not see much of them. Some of them dined with us once or twice ; Lord Huntly often came over in the morning, and he had William with him a great deal more than was good for an idle boy of his age.

I never like to think of the style of education given by the higher classes to their sons ; home indulgence, school liberty, college license, and no ennobling pursuits ; we are then surprised that the low gratification of the senses should almost entirely supersede with our young men the higher pleasures of an exercised intellect. In one very important particular, the management of themselves, they are never in the very least instructed. At Eton the boys had too much money, not to be laid

out by themselves for themselves, in necessities first and indulgences afterwards ; but all that they could possibly want being provided for them at a cost of which they knew not one item, their " pouches " were extra, to be wasted on nonsense, or worse ; some of these pouches were heavy, boys carrying back with them from ten guineas upwards according to the number of rich friends they had seen in the holidays, everybody " pouching " an Eton boy. William departed for Edinburgh really as ignorant as his little brother of how far his allowance would go, or what it would be wisest to do with it.

CHAPTER XII

1813-1814

THE winter of 1814 set in extremely cold ; we had the Spey frozen over early in January. The whole country was hung with frost, the trees looking like so many feathers sparkling with diamonds in the sunshine. The harvest-homes, and the forest ball, and the Christmas at Belleville, and the Christmas at the Doune had all taken place in due order ; our fête being remarkable by the opening of the library, now at last completed. The bookcases, finished by handsome cornices, and very high, looked very comfortable when quite filled with books ; all along the top were busts, vases, etc. The old Puritan in the ruff was over the mantelpiece. There were the Thorley telescope, microscope, theodolite, and other instruments of scientific value ; a large atlas, portfolios of prints, and a fair collection of books amounting to three or four thousand volumes ; there was not a subject on which information could not be gathered amongst them. There were some little old Elzevirs, Aldines, Baskervilles, and a Field Bible, to rank as curiosities. A shelf of huge folios, the architecture of Italy, Balbec, Palmyra, and other engravings, as I may well know, for I wrote the catalogue.

My father and I were months at this pleasant work, during the progress of which I think that my frivolous mind learned more of actual worth to me than it had taken in during all the former years of my young life.

We were still in the middle of our books when the poor old Captain died. He had been subject for many

years to violent attacks of *tic* in some of the nerves of the face. He had had teeth drawn, had been to Edinburgh to undergo treatment both surgical and medical, to no purpose. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, violent paroxysms of pain came on. The only relief he got was from heat; he had to live in a room like an oven. His good wife was so tender of him at these times; what a mass of comforts she collected round him!

He had been longer than usual without an attack; we were in hopes he was to be relieved during his decline from such agony, and so he was—but how? by a stroke of paralysis. It took him in the night, affected one whole side, including his countenance and his speech. He never recovered, even partially, and was a piteous spectacle sitting there helpless, well-nigh senseless, knowing no one but his wife, and not her always, pleased with the warmth of the fire and sugar-candy; the state of all others he had had the greatest horror of falling into. He always prayed to preserve his faculties of mind whatever befell the failing body, and he lost them completely; not a gleam of reason ever again shot across his dimmed intellect. This melancholy condition lasted some months, and then the old man died gently in the night, either eighty-four or eighty-six years of age.

The news was brought to the Doune early in the morning, and my father and mother set out immediately for Inverdrue. They remained there the greater part of the day. In the evening my father and I were occupied writing the funeral letters, and the orders to Inverness for mourning. Next day Jane and I were taken to Inverdrue. We had never seen a corpse, and the Captain had died so serenely, his vacant expression had disappeared so entirely, giving place to a placidity amounting to beauty, that it was judged no less startling first view of death could be offered to young people. The impression, however, was fearful; for days I did not recover from it. Jane, who always cried abundantly when excited, got over it more easily. The

colour—the indescribable want of colour, rather—the rigidity, the sharp outline of the high nose (he had prided himself on the size and shape of this feature), the total absence of flexibility, it was all horror—him, and not him. I longed to cry like Jane, but there came only a pain in my chest and head. My father preached a little sermon on the text before us. I am sure it was very good, but I did not hear it. He always spoke well and feelingly, and the people around seemed much affected; all *my* senses were absorbed by the awful image on that bed. We were led away, and then, while conversation was going on in the chamber of the widow, my mind's eye went back to the scene we had left, and things I had not seemed to notice appeared as I must have seen them.

The body lay on the bed in the best room; it had on a shirt well ruffled, a night-cap, and the hands were crossed over the breast. A white sheet was spread over all, white napkins were pinned over all the chair cushions, spread over the chest of drawers and the tables, and pinned over the few prints that hung on the walls. Two bottles of wine and a seed-cake were on one small table, bread, cheese, butter, and whisky on another, offered according to the rank of the numerous visitors by the solitary watcher beside the corpse, a natural daughter of the poor Captain's married to a farmer in Strathspey.

A great crowd was gathered in and about the house; the name of each new arrival was carried up immediately to Mrs Grant, who bowed her head in approbation; the more that came the higher the compliment. She said nothing, however; she had a serious part to play—the Highland widow—and most decorously she went through it. Every one expected it of her, for when had she failed in any duty? and every one must have been gratified, for this performance was perfect. She sat on the Captain's cornered arm-chair in a spare bedroom, dressed in a black gown, and with a white handkerchief pinned on her head, one *side* pinned round the head, all the rest hanging over it like

the kerchief on the head of Henry of Bolingbroke in some of the prints. Motionless the widow sat during the whole length of the day, silent and motionless; if addressed, she either nodded slowly or waved her head, or, if an answer were indispensable, whispered it. Her insignia of office, the big bright bunch of large house keys, lay beside her, and if required, a lady friend, first begging permission, and ascertaining by the nod or the wave which was the proper key to use, carried off the bunch, gave out what was wanted, and then replaced it.

All the directions for the funeral were taken from herself in the same solemn manner. We were awe-struck, the room was full, crowded by comers and goers, and yet a pin could have been heard to drop in it; the short question asked gravely in the lowest possible tone, the dignified sign in reply, alone broke the silence of the scene—for scene it was. Early in the morning, before company hours, who had been so busy as the widow? Streaking the corpse, dressing the chamber, settling her own, giving out every bit and every drop that was to be used upstairs and down by gentle and simple, preparing the additional supplies in case of need afterwards so quietly applied for by the friendly young lady, there was nothing, from the merest trifle to the matter of most importance, that she had not, her own active self, seen to.

I shall never forget her on the day of the funeral, the fifth day from the death. Her weeds had arrived, and remarkably well she looked in them. She, a plain woman in her ordinary rather shabby attire, came out in her new "mournings" like an elderly gentlewoman. She sat in the same room, in the same chair, with the addition of just a little more dignity, and a large white pocket-handkerchief. All her lady friends were round her, Miss Mary and Mrs William from the Croft, Mrs Macintosh from the Dell, Mrs Stewart from Pityoulish, two Miss Grants from Kinchurdy, her own sister Anne from Burnside, Miss Bell Macpherson from Invereshie, my mother, Jane, and I. There was little said; every

gig or horse arriving caused a little stir for a moment, hushed instantly.

The noise without was incessant, for a great concourse had assembled to convoy the last of Macalpine's sons to his long home.

A substantial collation had been set out in the parlour, and another, unlimited in extent, in the kitchen; people coming from so far, waiting for so long, required abundance of refreshment. They were by no means so decorous below as we were above in the lady's chamber, though we had our table of good things too; but we helped ourselves sparingly and quietly.

At length my father entered with a paper in his hand; it was the list of the pall-bearers. He read it over to Mrs Grant, and then gave it to her to read herself. She went over the names without a muscle moving, and then, putting her finger upon one, she said, "I would rather Ballintomb, they were brothers in arms." My father bowed, and then offered her his hand, on which she rose, and every one making way they went out together, a few following.

They passed along the passage to the death-chamber, where on trestles stood the coffin, uncovered as yet, and with the face exposed. The widow took her calm last look, she then raised a small square of linen—probably put there by herself for the purpose—and dropping it over the countenance, turned and walked away. It was never to be raised. Though Jane and I had been spared this solemnity, there was something in the whole proceedings that frightened us. When Mrs Grant returned to her arm-chair and lay back in it, her own face covered by a handkerchief, and when my father's step sounded on the stairs as he descended, and the screws were heard as one by one they fastened down the coffin lid, and then the heavy tramp of the feet along the passage as the men moved with their burden, we drew closer to each other and to good Mrs Mackenzie from Aviemore, who was among the company.

Hundreds attended the funeral. A young girl in her usual best attire walked first, then the coffin borne by four sets of stout shoulders, extra bearers grouping round, as the distance to the kirkyard was a couple of miles at least. Next came the near of kin, and then all friends fell in according to their rank without being marshalled. Highlanders never presume, their innate good-breeding never subjecting them to an enforced descent from a too honourable place; there is even a fuss at times to get them to accept one due to them. Like the bishops, etiquette requires them to refuse at first the proffered dignity. What would either say if taken at his word?

The Presbyterian Church has no burial ceremony. It is the custom, however, for the minister to attend, generally speaking, and to give a lengthy blessing before the feast, and a short prayer at the grave. Mr Grant of Duthil did his part better than was expected; no one, from the style of his sermons, anticipated the touching eulogy pronounced over the remains of the good old Captain—not undeserved, for our great-grand-uncle had died at peace with all the world. He was long regretted, many a kind action he had done, and never a harsh word had he said of or to any one.

My father gave the funeral feast at the Doune; most of the friends of fit degree accompanied him home to dinner. All sorts of pleasant stories went the round with the wine-bottles, and very merry they were, clergy and all; the parsons of Alvie and Abernethy were both there, coming in to the library to tea in high good-humour. The rest of the people, who had been abundantly refreshed at Inverdrue, dispersed.

The funeral over, there came on a marriage. Lord Huntly, now in the decline of his rackets life, overwhelmed with debts, sated with pleasure, tired of fashion, the last male heir of the Gordon line—married. What would not the mother who adored him have given to have seen his wedding-day? What regrets she caused to herself and to him for preventing the love of his youth from becoming her daughter-in-law! She

actually carried this beautiful girl away with her to Paris and married her to an old merchant, while her son was away with his regiment. His bride was young, and good, and rich, but neither clever nor handsome. She made him very happy, and paid his most pressing debts, that is her father did, old Mr Brodie of the Burn, brother to Brodie of Brodie, who either himself or somebody for him had had the good sense to send him with a pen to a counting-house instead of with a sword to the battle-field. He made a really large fortune; he gave with his daughter, his only child, one hundred thousand pounds down, and left her more than another at his death. Really to her husband her large fortune was the least part of her value; she possessed upright principles, good sense, and when by and by she began to feel her powers and took the management of his affairs, she turned out a first-rate woman of business. In her later years she got into the cant of the Methodists. At the time of her marriage she was very young, and too unformed to be shown as the bride of the fastidious Marquis, so while all the North was a blaze of bonfires in honour of the happy event, her lord carried her off abroad.

The minister of Alvie made what was thought a very indelicate allusion to "coming rejoicings closely connected with the present" in a speech to the crowd round the blazing pile on Tor Alvie; and as no after-events justified the prophecy, this incorrect allusion was never forgotten. The marriage was childless; Lord Huntly was the last Duke of Gordon.

Miss Elphick's mother having had a serious illness during the winter, and wishing to see her daughter, it was determined that we should have holiday for six weeks, and that our governess should travel to town under my father's escort, Caroline the French girl going with them. She was not to return; she had been very useful to us in naturalising her language amongst us. People may read a foreign language well, understand it as read, even write it well, but to speak it, to carry on the affairs of daily life from mere grammar and

dictionary learning, I do not believe to be possible. A needle full of thread was my first example in point. We were all at work, and I asked for "*du fil pour mon aiguille.*" "*Ah,*" said Caroline, "*une aiguillée de fil; tenez, mademoiselle;*" and so on with a thousand other instances never forgotten, for those eighteen months during which her Parisian French was our colloquial medium for the greater part of the day made us all thoroughly at home in the language; and though rusted by years of disuse, a week in France brought it back so familiarly to my sister Mary and me that the natives could not believe we had not been brought up in the country. My father was much pleased at his plan having succeeded so well; he however forbade any mixture of tongues; when we wrote or spoke English no French words were to be introduced; English, he said, was rich in expletives, there could be no difficulty in finding in it fit expressions to convey any meaning. He would send us to Dryden, Milton, Bolingbroke, and Addison in proof of this; were we to alter any sentences of theirs by changing an English for a French word we should enfeeble the style.

One of his favourite exercises for us was making us read aloud passages from his favourite authors; he himself had been taught by Stephen Kemble, and he certainly read beautifully. Jane was an apt pupil; she sometimes mouthed a little, but in general she in her clear round voice gave the music, as it were, to the subject, expressed so perfectly by the gentle emphasis she employed. William was not bad; I was wretched, they did nothing but make fun of me. They used to tell an abominable story of me—how Jane, having got grandly through the mustering of all the devils in hell, alias fallen angels, and ended magnificently with "He called so loud that all the hollow deep Of hell resounded" (as did our library!), I began in what William called my "childish treble," "Princes, Potentates," in a voice that a mouse at the fireside could have imitated!

Milton did not suit me, but Sterne was worse;

nobody *could* read Sterne, I am certain. My father could not; that ass, and the Lieutenant's death, and the prisoner—who could read them aloud, or without tears?

To return from this episode. My father, Miss Elphick, and Caroline happily off, we bade adieu to the restraints of the schoolroom. We did not neglect our studies, but we shoved them aside sometimes, and we led an easy sort of half-busy merry life, more out of doors than in, all the fine bright weather of the spring-tide. Jane looked after Mary's lessons, I carried Johnnie through his; we all four agreed that the governess was quite a supernumerary! Yet we owed her much; with Mary she had done wonders; by methodical perseverance she had roused her mind to exertion; Touchstone had been a great help. Jane and I were surprised to find the child who a year before could not count, able to work any sum in the simple rules. She gave great expression to the simple airs she had learnt on the pianoforte, and she had wakened up to ask questions, and to be merry and enjoy her walks, and though, from her great size for her age, her intellect remained slow till her growth of body was over, she was never again so inert as Miss Elphick had found her.

Johnnie was so easy to teach that he and I worked in sunshine. He was the dearest little fellow ever was in the world, not pretty except for fine eyes, small, slight, very quiet and silent, but full of fun, full of spirit, clever in seeing and hearing and observing and understanding all that went on around him, preferring to learn in this practical way rather than from books. He grew fond of reading, but he had found the mastering of the mere mechanical part so difficult that he had rather a distaste for the labour then.

We had two ponies at our command, William's pretty and rather headstrong Black Sally, and the old grey my mother used to ride to the reviews, now grown milk-white. He was large, but so quiet that Mary, who was a coward, was mounted on him. She never liked

riding, and went but seldom. Johnnie, besides being so little, was much of her mind; Jane and I therefore had our steed to ourselves, and plenty of use we made of it. We rode to Belleville, to the Dell of Killiehuntly, and all over the country up and down the Spey, a fat coachman on one of the carriage horses behind us.

At the Dell of Killiehuntly lived John and Betty Campbell, doing well, but alas! not happy. His brother shared the farm, a good managing man with whom it was easy to live—but he had a wife with whom it was *not* easy to live. The two ladies soon disagreed, and though they parted household—John and Betty living in the farmhouse, Donald and Mary in rooms they fitted up in the offices—perfect harmony never subsisted until sorrow came to both.

Donald and Mary had a fine son drowned in the Spey; John and Betty lost their only child, my god-daughter, in the measles. Neither bereaved mother ever “faulted” the other after these events. Each had shown so much heart on the occasion of the grief of the other, that some bond of kindness, at least of forbearance, existed evermore between them. Betty never got over her “puir Eliza’s” death; she never alluded to her, never replied when any one else did, nor did she appear altered outwardly, yet it had changed her. Her hair turned grey, her manner became restless, and from that day she never called me anything but Miss Grant, my Christian name she never uttered, nor the pet name “burdie” by which she had oftenest called us both. It altered John Campbell too. What had brought that pair together was a problem not to be solved. John had but very few words of English, it was difficult to make out his meaning when he tried to explain himself in that foreign language; to the end of his life he never got beyond the smattering he began with. Betty, a Forres woman, spoke broad, low-country Scotch, pure Morayshire, and never anything else to her husband or to any one; she never attempted the Gaelic. The language she did speak was all but incomprehensible, any English the Highlanders acquire being real good

English such as they are taught by books at school, and in conversation with the upper classes; Betty's was another tongue, the Low Dutch would have comprehended it as easily as did the Highlander, yet she and John managed to understand each other and to get on together lovingly, the grey mare taking the lead.

Both husband and wife loved us dearly; few events made either of them happier than the sight of our ponies picking their steps cannily down the brae a little piece away from their good farmhouse. All that they had of the best was brought out for us, our steeds and our fat attendant faring equally well for our sakes; and then Betty would promise to return the visit, and she would not forget her promise either, but walk her eight or nine miles some fine day, and pay her respects all through the Duchus. She always reminded me of Meg Merrilies, a tall, large-framed, powerfully-made woman, with dark flashing eyes and raven hair, eminently handsome, though resolute-looking. Her dress, though of a different style from the gipsy's, was picturesque; a linsey gown, white neckerchief, white apron, a clear close-fitting cap with a plaited lace-edged border, and a bright satin ribbon to bind it on the head, and over this a high steeple cap of clearer muslin, set farther back than the underneath one so that the borders did not interfere. A red plaid of the Campbell tartan, spun and dyed by herself, was thrown round her when she went out.

She spun the wool for stockings too, and knitted them; at fine needleworks she was not expert, indeed she was too active to sit to them. She was a stirring wife, in and out, but and ben, cooking, washing, cleaning, keeping a quick eye over all, warm-tempered and kind-hearted. In her old age, when husband and child were gone, Betty grew fond of money. She was free-handed in happier days.

Miss Elphick returned before my father. She came by sea to Inverness, stayed a day or two with the Coopers, and then came on in the gig with Mr Cooper, who had business with William Cameron and such a dose

of north country gossip for my mother ! She liked a little gossip, and she got abundance. I like gossip too, I suppose we all do, clever gossip, but not Mr Cooper's : "The laird of *this*, his bills flying about ; the lady of *that*, too sharp a tongue to keep a servant. Everything under lock and key at Glen *here* ; open house to all comers at Rath *there*. Fish bought at extravagantly high price by Mrs *So-and-So* of New Street, while the children of *Some-one* in Church Lane often came to Mrs Cooper for a 'piece.'" He was a kind good-natured man, and his home was very happy. Miss Elphick admired him extremely, "his coats fitted so beautifully." She had brought for her own wear from London a bottle-green cloth surcoat, much braided, quite military-looking, and a regular man's hat, a Welsh style of dress she fancied particularly becoming and suited to her, as tartans were to us, her mother being a Welsh-woman. In this guise she went in the month of May, or June indeed, to pay her visit of condolence to the widow at Inverdrue ; a farewell on our part, Mrs Grant having determined to give up her farm and return to Burnside to keep house with her very old mother and her bachelor brother. We were coming back, and had reached the turn in the road under the bank of fir trees near James Macgregor's, when a disastrous piece of news reached us. What we called "the widows' house" at Loch-an-Eilan was burnt to the ground.

My father had always had a turn for beautifying Rothiemurchus with cottages ; it was more that, at first, than the wish to improve the dwellings of the people, consequently his first attempts were guiltless of any addition to the family comfort. A single room, thatched, with a gable end battened down at top, like a snub nose, had been stuck on the hill at the Polchar for the gamekeeper, on the bank at the ferry for the boatman, at the end of the West gate as a lodge. They were all as inconvenient as any old turf hut, and a great deal more ugly, because more pretending.

Searching through our drawing-books for a model

for the Croft improved his ideas of cottage architecture ; also, he now better understood the wants of a household. He picked out a number of pretty elevations, suggested the necessary changes, and left it to Jane and me to make correct drawings and working plans.

We had to try perhaps a dozen times before a sketch was sufficiently good to be accepted. We became attached to the subjects ; it was no wonder that the new cottages became of such importance to us. The West gate was the first improved. It was lengthened by a room, heightened sufficiently to allow of a store loft under the steep roof, the snub nose disappeared, the heather thatch was extended by means of supporting brackets, and a neat verandah ran along the side next the road and round the gable end. We trained Ayrshire roses on the walls, honeysuckle on the verandah, and we planted all sorts of common flowers in a border between the cottage and the road. It was a pretty cottage, particularly suited to the scenery, and when neatly kept was one of the shows of the place.

The next attempt was the Polchar, a more ambitious one, for there were a front and a back door, a long passage, staircase, pantry, kitchen, parlour, and two bedrooms above. It was very picturesque with its overhanging heather-thatched roof, its tall chimneys, and its wide latticed windows. There was no border of flowers, only a small grass plot and a gravel walk, but there was an enclosed yard fronted by the dog kennels, and a path led to a good kitchen garden laid out in a hollow close by. Another path went down to the edge of the first of the chain of Lochans, and on through the birch wood to the Croft. Another path skirted these little lochs by James Macgregor's to the fir forest—aunt Mary's walk. It was a model for the dwelling of a Highland gamekeeper.

Next came a cottage for four aged widows ; they had been living apparently in discomfort, either alone in miserable sheilings, far from aid in case of sickness, and on such dole as kind neighbours gave helped by a

share of the poor's box, or in families weary enough of the burden of supporting them.

My father thought that by putting them all together he could lodge them cheaply, that they might be of use to one another in many ways, and that the help given to them would go farther when less subdivided. It was a really beautiful home that he built for them; there were the cantilever roof of heather, the wide latticed windows, the tall chimneys, but he made it two storeys high, and he put the staircase leading to the upper rooms outside. It had quite a Swiss look. Sociable as were his intentions regarding the widows, he knew too well to make them live together except when they were inclined. Each was to have a room and a closet for herself. Two of them were to live on the ground floor with a separate entrance to their apartments, one door opening from the front, the other from the back of the house; the two above reached their abode by the hanging staircase, a balcony landing each beside her door-window.

We were charmed with this creation of our united fancies, and had grand plans for suitable fittings, creeping plants, flower borders, rustic seats, and furniture. The loch was on one hand; the meal-mill at the foot of the Ord, with the burnie, the mill-race, a few cottages and small fields, on the other; the grey mountains and the forest behind; all was divine but the spirit of woman. The widows rebelled; old, smoke-dried, shrivelled-up witches with pipes in their mouths, and blankets on their backs, they preferred the ingle-nook in their dark, dirty, smoke-filled huts to this picture of comfort. Stone walls were cold, light hurt the eyes, deal floors got dirty and had to be scrubbed! The front door complained of the outside stair, it was so much in the way and noisy; the back door objected to entering at the back, she had as good a right as her neighbour to the exit of honour; her windows looked on the burn, there was no road that way, she could see nothing; she equally detested the stairs though they were not near her; both ground

floors said that people going up and coming down, for ever crossing them in all ways, forced them to spend a great deal of valuable time at the foot of this annoyance, expostulating with the upper windows for the ceaseless din they made. These more exalted ladies felt themselves quite as ill used as those beneath them. Their backs were broken carrying burdens up those weary stairs; no one could come to see them without being watched from below. In short, they were all in despair, agreeing in nothing but hatred of their beautiful home. The fact is that they were not fit for it; it is not at threescore and ten that we can alter habits and the feelings grown out of them. It was very little understood then where to begin, and how slowly it was necessary to go on in order to reach the first even of the many resting-places on the road to better ways.

The poor Captain sealed the fate of the widows' house. One day after he had come in from his drive in the old pony phaeton with the long-tailed black pony, somebody asking which way he had been, he replied, "By Rothie's poorhouse at Loch-an-Eilan." Of all things on earth this name is most repugnant to the feelings of the Highlander; to be paraded as inmates of a recognised almshouse was more than the pride of any clanswoman could bear, and so it fell out that *by accident* the heather thatch took fire, and although neighbours were near, and a stream ran past the door, and the widows were all alive during the burning, active as bees removing their effects—the stairs being no hindrance—the flames raged on. In the morning only blackened walls remained.

We could not help being so far uncharitable as to believe that whether or no they had lit the spark that threw them homeless on the world, they had at least taken no trouble to extinguish it.

My father was much annoyed at this misfortune; he would do nothing towards any further arrangements for the comfort of these old bodies. Perhaps they lived to repent their folly. He did not, however, give

up his building; the next cottage he undertook was given to more grateful occupants. He had intended it as a toy for my mother, but the amusement of fitting it up not suiting her tastes, it was eventually made over to us, and became one of the principal delights of our happy Rothiemurchus life.

We will *pause* before describing it. Dalachapple once conversing with my mother concerning some firm in Glasgow the partners in which had been her acquaintance in her dancing day, "They failed, did not they?" said she. "They *paused*," said he; and so will we.

CHAPTER XIII

1814

IN years long gone by a certain William Grant had enlisted as a soldier and gone off to foreign parts, never to return in his former station among his people. He rose early from the ranks, and during a prosperous career in India won for himself fame, and rupees to balance it. A curious kind of narrow-minded man, he had, however, the common virtue of his race—he never forgot his relations; in his advancement he remembered all, none were neglected. There was a deal of good sense, too, in the ways he took to provide for them. One brother was never more nor less than a common soldier; we knew him as Peter the Pensioner, on account of sixpence a day my father got him from Greenwich, in lieu of an eye he had lost in some engagement. He lived in one of the cottages on the Milltown muir, with a decent wife and a large family of children, all of whom earned their bread by labour. We had a son in the wood-work and a daughter as kitchenmaid during the time their uncle the General was paying a visit to us. The next brother rose to be a major, and retiring from the army in middle life, settled on the farm of Craggan some miles down Speyside. His two sons, educated by the uncle, were both lieutenant-colonels before their death. The daughter, to whom he was equally kind, he took out to India, where she married a civilian high in the service. The rest of his relations he left in their own place, merely befriending them occasionally; but for his mother, when she became a widow and wished to

return to Rothiemurchus, where she was born, he built a cottage in a situation chosen by herself, at the foot of the Ord Bain, surrounded by birch trees, just in front of the old castle on the loch. Here she lived many years very happy in her own humble way on a little pension he transmitted to her regularly, neither "lifted up" herself by the fortunate career of her son, nor more considered by the neighbours in consequence. She was just the Widow Grant to her death.

After she was gone, no one caring to live in so lonely a spot, the cottage fell to ruin; only the walls were standing when my father took a fancy to restore it, add to it, and make it a picture of an English cottage home. He gave it high chimneys, gable ends, and wide windows. Within were three rooms, a parlour, a front kitchen boarded, and a back kitchen bricked. He hoped my mother would have fitted it up like to her Houghton recollections of peasant comfort, but it was not her turn. She began indeed by putting six green-painted Windsor chairs into the front kitchen, and hanging a spare warming-pan on the wall, there being no bedroom in the cottage; there her labours ended. The shutters of those cheerful rooms were seldom opened, stones and moss lay undisturbed around its white-washed walls, hardly any one ever entered the door; but it had a good effect in the scenery. Coming out of the birch wood it struck every eye, and seen from the water when we were in the boat rowing over the loch, that single habitation amid the solitude enlivened the landscape. We young people had the key, for it was our business to go there on fine days to open the windows, and sometimes when we walked that way we went in to rest. How often we had wished it were our own, that we might fit it up to our fancy.

This spring I was furnished with a new occupation. My mother told me that my childhood had passed away; I was now seventeen, and must for the future be dressed suitably to the class "young lady" into which I had passed. Correct measurements were taken

by the help of Mrs Mackenzie, and these were sent to the Miss Grants of Kinchurdy at Inverness, and to aunt Leitch at Glasgow. I was extremely pleased; I always liked being nicely dressed, and when the various things ordered arrived, my feelings rose to delight. My sisters and I had hitherto been all dressed alike. In summer we wore pink gingham or nankin frocks in the morning, white in the afternoon. Our common bonnets were of coarse straw, lined with green, and we had tippets to all our frocks. The best bonnets were of finer straw, lined and trimmed with white, and we had silk spencers of any colour that suited my mother's eye. In the winter we wore dark stuff frocks, black and red for a while—the intended mourning for the king. At night always scarlet stuff with bodices of black velvet and bands of the same at the hem of the petticoat. While in England our wraps were in pelisse form and made of cloth, with beaver bonnets; the bonnets did in the Highlands, but on outgrowing the pelisses they were replaced by cloaks with hoods, made of tartan spun and dyed by Jenny Dairy, the red dress tartan of our clan, the sett originally belonging to the Grants. Our habits were made of the green tartan, now commonly known by our name, and first adopted when the Chief raised the 42nd regiment; it was at first a rifle corps, and the bright red of the belted plaid being too conspicuous, that colour was left out in the tartan woven for the soldiers; thus it gradually got into use in the clan, and still goes by the name of the Grant 42nd tartan.

I now burst out full-blown into the following wardrobe. Two or three gingham dresses of different colours very neatly made with frills, tucks, flounces, etc. Two or three cambric muslins in the same style with embroidery upon them, and one pale lilac silk, pattern a very small check, to be worn on very grand occasions—my first silk gown. A pink muslin and a blue muslin for dinner, both prettily trimmed, and some clear and some soft muslins, white of course, with sashes of different colours tied at one side in two

small bows with two very long ends. In the bright, glossy, pale auburn hair no ornament was allowed but natural flowers. The gowns, very much flounced some of them, were not unlike what we wear now, only the petticoats were scanty and the waists short, so short as to be most extremely disfiguring. The best bonnet was white chip trimmed with white satin and very small, very pale, blush roses, and the new spencer was of blush-rose pink. Then there were pretty gloves, neat shoes, silk neckerchiefs, and a parasol. Fancy my happiness—I that had been kept so completely a child, was in fact so young for my age! It might have turned my head but for two or three circumstances. The drawing-room was so dull that, after a few stately days passed there in my new dignity, I slid back to my sisters in the schoolroom, undeterred from pursuing such studies as I liked by the foolish sneers and taunts of poor Miss Elphick, who, with the weak jealousy of an inferior mind, chafed extremely at losing a pupil; and after all, it was losing only the unlimited authority over her. Next, it was not easy to dress myself in my finery up in my corner of the barrack-room, and it was very difficult to carry myself and my flounces safely down the narrow turning stair which led to the passage opening on the front staircase. Also, having no wardrobe, my dresses were kept in a trunk; the one I wanted seemed generally somehow at the bottom of it, and so troublesome to get at.

A good deal of quiet gaiety took place this autumn. We had our usual relay of guests. Glenmoriston married this year; he and his bride were with us nearly a week on their way to Invermoriston after the wedding. Logie and Mrs Cumming were not with us; Alexander was for some time; he rode up on his pony, a fine boy, in deep mourning for his father, who had died suddenly under painful circumstances.

A public meeting had been held at Nairn, to be followed by a dinner; Logie was expected, and not arriving, the meeting had to proceed without him, and so had the dinner. The master of the hotel was a

capital cook, famous for dressing 'mushrooms well. This was a favourite dish of Logie's, and Logie himself being a favourite, the landlord reserved a portion for him, keeping it hot in the copper skillet he had cooked it in. Logie did come, accounting in some way for his delay; he ate the mushrooms, was taken ill, every symptom that of poison, and he died in agony before the morning. His head was no great loss, but his heart was, for he was kind to everybody, and was long regretted by his neighbourhood.

Mr and Mrs Dunbar Brodie came as usual from Coulmonie, she riding on her grey pony, he driving all the luggage in a gig, flageolet included; and we went to the loch and rowed on the water and played to the echo, and then she measured all the rooms.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Huntly arrived at Kinrara. We gave them a few days to settle before calling, but might have spared our delicacy, for the following morning a great racket was heard at the ferry close to the house, and presently the peculiar laugh of the Marquis; soon he appeared at the window in his old shabby shooting-dress and one of his queer hats, without gloves, calling to my father and mother to come out, he had brought his wife to visit them; and there she was, like another Cinderella, in a beautiful baby phaeton drawn by four goats. The pretty animals were harnessed with red ribbons, and at every horned head there ran a little foot-page, these fairy steeds being rather unruly.

The whole equipage had been brought over in our small passenger boat. No sylph stepped out of this frail machine, but a stout bouncing girl, not tastefully attired, and with a pale broad face, fair—which he never liked—and stiff—which he could not endure. He grew very fond of her, and so did I; the rest of the family never took to her, and my father and mother remembering her predecessor, the beautiful brilliant Duchess, could not avoid making disadvantageous comparisons.

Kinrara too was different, a more elevated and very stupid society, dull propriety, regularity, ceremony.

There was a feast of food, but not of reason ; a flow of wine, but not of soul. I cannot wonder that they sighed over the change and thought with regret over the bright spirits departed.

They came and dined with us ; we were alone. She was very timid. She never had the gift of conversation ; she could talk well on a subject that interested her, and with a person she liked, otherwise she was silent. Buonaparte would not have chosen her for the wife of one of his marshals ; she did not shine in her reception rooms. We did not get on well at this dinner, we ladies by ourselves in the drawing-room. I was of no use, having only just been brought out of the schoolroom ; besides, it was not then the custom for young persons to speak unless spoken to. At last Lady Huntly proposed music, and on the pianoforte being opened she sat down to it to let us hear some Swiss airs she had picked up in her travels. The first chord was sufficient, the touch was masterly. In every style she played well, but her Scotch music, tender or lively, was perfection. Sir Walter Scott immortalised this delightful talent of hers in his *Halidon Hill*, and she merited his highest praise. I have never heard her surpassed or even equalled, as I do not reckon that wonderful finger-work now in fashion as worth listening to. Her lord, who was very little sensible of the power of harmony, was always pleased with her music, listening to it with evident pleasure and pride, particularly when she gave him the reels and strathspeys he danced so well, when he would jump up gaily and crack his fingers, and ask did any one ever hear better playing than that.

Of course we were to dine at Kinrara, a visit the idea of which frightened me out of my wits. I was not afraid of Lord Huntly, I knew him well and he was my cousin besides ; but she was so stiff, and I knew there would be company, strangers, and I had never dined out. Young people did not slide into society then. They strode at once from pinafores, bread and butter, and the governess, into long petticoats and their silent,

young-lady place. They did not add to the general sociability, most of them could not; unpractised as they were in all that was going and doing and saying, their little word would most likely have been put in out of season. In the ordinary run of houses company was anything but pleasant. Everybody seemed to assume an unnatural manner; they did not follow their customary employments; the books, and the drawings, and the needlework were all put carefully out of sight. All were put out of their way too by a grand fatigue day of best glass, best china, best linen, furniture uncovered, etc., making everything look and feel as unlike home as possible. It was not a welcome we gave our friends, but a worry they gave us.

In great houses there were skilful servants to take all this trouble and to prevent mistakes or fuss; in lesser houses it was annoying. There was little of this sort of troublesome preparation in our house, but there was a degree of formality, it was the manner of the day; and happily and easily as we lived with our parents when alone, or when only intimate friends were with them, we knew we were to keep at a respectful distance from *company*; it was a distasteful word, and the having to encounter all it meant in a strange house among strangers was far from agreeable.

After dressing myself in the blue muslin frock, with wild roses in my hair, I should have felt more at ease had not my mother thought it necessary to read me a lecture on proper behaviour, so depriving me of all self-possession; I was thoroughly uncomfortable during an evening that might have afforded me pleasure. Lord Huntly, too, increased this agitation by calling attention to me most unpleasantly. It was during dinner, that great long table filled with guests, covered with plate, brilliantly lighted, and a servant behind every chair. He was the greatest fidget on earth. He had a set of rules for his household, any infringement of which was visited by rigorous punishment. He used to be up himself to call the maids in the morning, in the kitchen at odd times to see what was doing; at no hour of the

day, or the night indeed, was the family safe from the bright—very bright—eyes of my lord, peering here, there, and everywhere. So during the dinner he was glancing about all round the room, talking, laughing, apparently only intent on being agreeable; yet he knew all that was going on at the sideboard behind him better than Wagstaffe who presided there. The gentlemen-sportsmen between whom I was placed found very little to interest them in the shy replies made by a young girl, hardly beyond childhood, to their few civil speeches. They busied themselves elsewhere and left me to the use of my eyes, and for them there was abundant amusement. I was accustomed to long dinners with all their tiresome courses, therefore bore the tedium of this very patiently. At last we reached the “sweets,” and I took some jelly; not finding a fork beside my plate I asked my attendant for one, very gently too—I hardly heard my own voice. But Lord Huntly heard it right well—out he burst: “No fork for Miss Grant! A fork for Miss Grant Rothiemurchus directly! Wagstaffe, pray who attends to these things? Who sees the covers laid? Great inattention somewhere! This must not happen again. Lizzy, have you got your fork? Now for the jelly, ha! ha! ha!” How I wished I had made shift with the spoon. I would gladly have sunk under the table, for the storm had hushed every voice and turned every eye on poor me. I hardly ever remember feeling more miserable. Certainly bashfulness is very near akin to vanity. Jane would have gone through the whole unmoved, and would have thought Wagstaffe and suite fully deserving of the reproof they got.

My next public appearance was much happier. It was the house-warming at the Croft. The family had already taken possession of the pretty new cottage, and the old had been turned into offices. Mr Cameron had promised us a dance to commemorate the change; he now determined to give a dinner first, a dinner superintended by Mrs William, who had been invested by her father-in-law with all power over the new premises.

My father and mother and William went to the dinner, the rest of us followed to the tea in our favourite equipage, a cart filled with hay. We always went in a cart to the Dell when we could, because of the seven streams of the Druie we had to ford; it was so charming to be close to the water and to hear ourselves rumble over the stones; the hay prevented our being hurt by the jolting, and plenty of plaids kept us warm. Even Miss Elphick enjoyed this manner of visiting. We generally sang all the way, bursting into screams of laughter when a big stone under the wheel cut short a holding note. We had a rough enough road to the Croft, a mere cart-track past the Fairy's Knowe to the Moss Riachan, and so on into the birch wood. William Cameron afterwards made a good approach to his house by this route, admired by every one but me; I had something of my aunt Lissy in me, and liked it all in the wild state. The gates were all open for us—a lucky thought, as they had no hinges; they were merely tied by two withes on one side and one on the other, and had to be pulled back by a strong arm.

Between parlour, kitchen, and barn we had nearly all Rothiemurchus at the Croft house-warming; Duncan Macintosh playing his best, his son Johnnie in tartan, and our Johnnie in his frightful short-waisted nankin frock and trousers, dancing the fling with all their hearts and cracking their small fingers. Old Mr Cameron danced too, and called for his tune *The Auld Wife ayont the Fire*, and instead of kissing his partner went up and kissed the old lady where she sat by the hearth in the old chair, and in the bonnet and shawl and green shade as usual. We were all so merry except her; she was neither graver nor gayer than was her wont.

This merry dance there was the end of the old times. Whether the old lady had caught cold when moving, or whether her ailing frame had simply been worn out, she never seemed to thrive after leaving the little "but and ben" she had so long lived in. Before the winter set in Mrs Cameron died without any

suffering. She was buried with the rest of us in the small enclosure in the kirkyard, her husband appearing at the funeral, in the house, and at the refreshment table, just as if it had been any other person's. He came in to visitors afterwards with his calm manner unaltered; there was no change in him to common eyes, nor in the proceedings of the family. There was only her chair empty, and a shade over his benignant countenance that never left it. Before the spring he was laid beside her. We were far away when we lost him. Many many years have passed since I last heard him try Crochallan—he never touched the “trump” after his wife's death—but I shall never forget Mr Cameron, a real Highland gentleman, loving us with the love of kin, teaching us all wisdom, piety and a lively fancy glowing through his clear, sound sense.

Before these melancholy events, we proceeded this pleasant autumn with the usual merry-makings. There was more company at the Doune, though I cannot remember who they were, and there were more dinners at Kinrara, no longer formidable, and a party at Belleville during some days, when for the first time to my recollection I saw him whom by courtesy for many years we continued to call young Charles Grant. Writing that once familiar name again is pleasant to me, recalling so much that was enjoyable, although some little that awakens regret. He was no ordinary man, and to be so thoroughly estranged from one who had been quite a son of the house, a dear elder brother, is cause for grief in a world where few of us ever suit sufficiently for intimacy. There was no fault on either part, it was merely that our paths through life lay differently. His father had been with us most summers; he was our county member, so had to come to look after political interests. He was now intending to introduce his son to the electors against the time when he should himself, from age or weariness, disincline to continue in Parliament. The north country owed him much; we got canals, roads, bridges, cadetships, and writerships in almost undue proportion. My father, his

firm friend and most useful supporter, seldom applied in vain for anything in the old Director's power to give. We had reason to be grateful for all his many kindnesses, but he was never to any of us the delightful companion that we found his son.

Young Charles was at this time deeply in love with Emilia Cumming. She was a lovely-looking woman—not a regular beauty, but more attractive than many handsome persons. Old Charles Grant had reasons for forbidding a marriage between them, and they were good ones, acquiesced in by his son, who yet had not the resolution to avoid her society. Year after year he dangled about her till her youth and her beauty went, and he found absence no longer a difficulty. Neither of them married.

Mrs Macpherson, who had known him from a child, was really absurdly attached to him. She was anxious we should make an agreeable impression on each other. I do not remember that he spoke ten words to me, nor looked a second time at the childish girl quite overpraised to him. On my part, half a look was enough; I thought him hideous, tall, thin, yellow, grave, with sandy hair, small light eyes, and a shy awkward manner, though nearly as old as my father and already of some note among clever men. These were the dear friends of after-days! We have often laughed over our introduction.

Then came the Pitmain Tryst. It was an old custom to hold a cattle market yearly in the month of September on a moor between Kingussie and Pitmain. Instead of, as in Ireland, the farmers flying about on cars to fairs, dressed in old clothes and with bank-notes in an inside pocket, to buy a lot of beasts from the small rearing farmers, choosing them here and there according to their fitness for the quality of grass they are destined to fatten on, our Highland proprietors reared large stocks of young cattle, disposed of regularly once a year at the current price. Belleville had a hundred cows, thus he had every year a hundred stots, sold generally for from £7 to £8 apiece. If any died during

their period of growth he made up his number by buying from the cottar farmers, the only way these little bodies had of disposing of their single beast. Balnespick kept up fifty store cows, my father thirty. There was great emulation among them as to which reared the finest cattle. I must confess that though my father boasted of his superior breeding, great pains being taken to improve the stock, Belleville generally got the top price at the Tryst. The buyers were drovers, such men as Walter Scott most faithfully describes in *Rob Roy*. It was a separate trade. The drovers bought, and paid for, and carried off their purchase in large herds to the south, either to be privately disposed of or resold at Falkirk for the English market.

A few substantial yeomen farmers were gradually establishing themselves in the country, some of whom were also drovers, who tried hard by patient industry to rival the produce of the laird's fuller purse. They probably made more of the business in the end. Our fine Staffa bull was choked by an uncut turnip. His price swallowed up a deal of profit.

After the market in the morning, there was a dinner in the evening, drovers, farmers, and lairds all meeting in the large room at Pitmain to enjoy the best good cheer the county afforded. Lord Huntly presided, and sent a stag from Gaick forest. My father was croupier, and very grand speeches he and others made after the punch began to circulate.

This year it was proposed that the ladies should be invited to shine on the assemblage—not at the dinner, but to prepare tea in another room, which would break up the punch party earlier, and allow of the larger apartment being meanwhile prepared for dancing. Both Lord Huntly and my father were promoters of this sort of mixed meeting, so consonant to the spirit of feudalism still cherished throughout our mountains. They themselves were the life and soul of such gatherings, courteous to all, gay in manner, and very gallant to the fair. The ball was received with much favour, and in future always followed the

Tryst, doing more in the way of improving the country than any one at first sight would suppose. Besides the renewal of intercourse between the ranks, leading to a continuance of kind feeling, a sort of stimulus was given to the spirits of those whom Belleville called *the bodies*. They had hardly finished talking over the pleasure of the one meeting before the preparations for the next had to be begun. Husbands were proud of producing handsome wives nicely dressed; mothers looked forward to bringing with them pretty daughters to be introduced to grander friends. The dress and the manners of the higher portion of the company had a sensible effect on the lower. Mrs John Macnab's first cap was greatly moderated on her second appearance, and Janet Mitchell's boisterous dancing fined down into a not unbecoming sprightliness of movement.

All this is over now. The few grandees shut themselves up rigorously in their proud exclusiveness. Those who could have perpetuated a better tone are gone, their places know them no more. Our former wise occasional reunions are matters of history; each section appears now to keep apart, unnoticed by the class above, and in turn not noticing the class below.

Lady Huntly did not do her part with all the charming kindness of her lord. She kept up at the head of the room among her own Kinrara guests, laughing so frequently that nothing could persuade the Laggan and Badenoch farmers that she was not ridiculing them. Her dancing did not quite redeem her character, though it was good, in the old reel and strathspey style. The sort of thing did not suit her, it was plain her being there at all was an effort.

The Lady Belleville was known of old to keep herself very distant, but she was a Southron, and little was expected from her. She sat up in her big red turban amid the great, and there she, and such as she, were allowed to sit; all the rest of the room were in high glee, dancing, old and young, almost without a rest.

One of the ladies most in repute as a partner was a

very old Mrs Macintosh of Borlam, who lived in the village of Kingussie with her daughter, the widow of a Major Macpherson, and a comely widow too. The *Leddy* Borlam was said to be not far from ninety years of age, upright, active, slender, richly dressed for her station, and with a pleasant countenance. Her handsome silks caused many a sly remark. She was the widow of a celebrated freebooter whom Sir Thomas Lauder endeavoured to portray as "Lochandhu." There were many tales current of his doings in our part of the country. A cave he hid his treasures in was still open on the hill at Belleville, for he did not deal in black cattle only; no traveller was safe when Borlam wanted. His wife was said to have been frequently occupied in picking out the marks in the fine holland ruffled shirts it was his especial coxcombry to appear in, and it was more than whispered that he had given her *braws* enough to last beyond a lifetime; seemingly a true suspicion, for the Lady Borlam's silks would stand alone, and she had plenty of them. With them she wore the Highland *mutch* (the high clear cap of fine muslin, trimmed, in her case with Flanders lace), and then, calm as a princess, she moved about in her ill-gotten gear. She was a wonderful old woman, keen, merry, kindly, and as *cute* as an Irishwoman, never tripping in her talk, or giving the remotest hint of the true character of her lamented husband.

The Northern Meeting was to all of our degree as important a gathering as was the Badenoch Tryst to our humbler acquaintance. It had been set agoing soon after my birth by her who was the life of all circles she entered, the Duchess of Gordon. She had persuaded all the northern counties to come together once a year about the middle of October, and spend the better part of a week at Inverness. There were dinners and balls in the evenings; the mornings were devoted to visiting neighbouring friends and the beautiful scenery abounding on all sides. She had always herself taken a large party there, and done her utmost to induce her friends to do likewise—stray English

being particularly acceptable, as supposed admirers of our national beauties! while enacting the part of lion themselves. No one with equal energy had replaced her; still, the annual meeting went on, bringing many together who otherwise might not have become acquainted, renewing old intimacies, and sometimes obliterating old grudges.

New dresses had come for my decoration, and beautiful flowers chosen by dear Annie Grant, her last kind office for a while for any of us. There were white muslin with blue trimmings, shoes to match, and roses; white gauze, pink shoes and trimmings, and hyacinths; pearl-grey gauze and pink, and a Bacchus wreath of grapes and vine leaves, for we had three balls, dinners before the first two, and a supper after the last. With what delight I stepped into the barouche which was to carry us to this scene of pleasure! I had no fears about partners, Pitmain had set me quite at ease on that score. We went through the ford at Inverdrue, every one we met bidding us godspeed, and looking after us affectionately—for it was an era in the annals of the family, this coming out of Miss Grant—and we stopped at Aviemore to have a few pleasant words with Mrs Mackenzie. It had been a beautiful drive so far, all along by the banks of the Spey, under the shade of the graceful birch trees, the well-wooded rock of Craigellachie rising high above us to the left after we had crossed the river. Just at the foot of this, our beacon-hill, there lies, quite close to Aviemore, a little loch shrouded in the wood, and full of small sweet trout, which during the earthquake at Lisbon was strangely agitated, dashing about in its small basin in a way not soon to be forgotten. It is the last bit of beauty on the road for many a long mile. A bare moor, with little to mark on it or near it, leads on to the lonely inn at Freeburn, a desolate dirty inn, where never was found a fire, or anything comfortable. A short way from this abode of despair, a fine valley far below opens on the view, containing a lake of some extent, the banks artificially wooded, a good stretch of

meadowland, and a new house built by the Laird of Mackintosh, the Chief of his Clan, "my uncle Sir Eneas." The planting was then so young that even in that wilderness this solitary tract of cultivation was hardly worthy of much praise. Later on it grew into a fine place—roads were made, and shrubberies and gardens, and the trees grew to a goodly size, but the succeeding Mackintosh did not live there; he preferred Divie Castle near Inverness, and Moy, the ancient residence of his family, was let to sportsmen. From Freeburn the moor extends again, another dreary waste till we reached a wild scene I always admired. The Findhorn, an unsheltered, very rocky stream, rises somewhere beyond the ken of travellers, and tumbles on through a gully whose high banks give only an occasional glimpse of fair plains far off. A new road has been engineered along the sides of this "pass of the wild boars," Slochd Mor, thought a wonder of skill when viewed beside the narrow precipitous pathway tracked out by General Wade, up and down which one could scarcely be made to believe a carriage, with people sitting in it, had ever attempted to pass. My mother had always walked those two or three miles, or the greater part of them, the new route not having been completed till some years after her marriage. A third now puts to shame that much-praised second, and the planting, the cottages with gardens, and the roadside inns have all given a different character to this once bare region. There is no change, however, near Inverness; there could be no improvement. It breaks upon the eye weary of the monotony of the journey as a fairy scene on drawing up a curtain. On rising the hill at the Kirk of Divie—where the curious belfry is ever so far from this desolate place of worship—the whole of the Moray Firth, with the bounding Ross-shire hills, the great plain of Culloden, Loch Ness, the mountains beyond that fine sheet of water, the broad river, and one of the prettiest of towns scattered about its banks just as it meets the sea, open before wondering eyes. That vale of beauty must have been a

surprise to the first discoverer—no Roman; their legions crept along the coast to reach their fort at Euchlass, they never tried the Grampians.

We put up at Mr Cooper's good house in Church Street, where we were made very welcome and very comfortable; and being tired with our day's work, we enjoyed a quiet evening with Mrs Cooper and her girls. We had come purposely the day before the first ball for the rest. The next morning I was sent with some of the children to Castle Hill, a very pretty farm of Mr Cooper's three miles from Inverness. We came back in time for me to get my toilet laid out ready, and my mother's too, with help, and to have my hair dressed by Mr Urquhart.

Probably all young girls have felt once in their lives, at least, as I felt on mounting the broad, handsome staircase of the Northern Meeting rooms on my father's arm. The hall was well lit, the music sounded joyously, and my heart beat so high, it might have been seen to palpitate! My mother and I passed into a suite of waiting-rooms, where poor Peggy Davidson's aunt attended to take care of the wraps, then rejoining my father we entered, through the large folding-doors, our fine assembly rooms. All was noise and blaze and mob. I could neither see nor hear distinctly. A pleasant voice sounded near, it was Glenmoriston's; he was there with his wife, and his sisters, and her sisters, and their husbands and cousins, a whole generation of us. A little farther on we encountered relations I did not know, Colonel and Mrs Rose of Holme, just returned from India; she was a little plain woman loaded with diamonds; he was delightful, although he did introduce to me a very ugly small, pock-marked man, the captain of the Indiaman who brought them home, and with this remarkable partner I joined the long country dance then forming. My captain danced well; he was very pleasant too, and much amused at the shaking of hands that took place between me and half the room. We were really acquainted with almost everybody, and of kin to a great number.

Lord and Lady Huntly were there with a large party. Old Lady Saltoun ditto, dancing away in an open frock almost as lightly as her pretty daughter Eleanor—who afterwards married young Mr Grant of Arndilly—and she near eighty. Charlotte Rose, now Lady Burgoyne, was very pretty, and danced beautifully; but the beauties of the room, I thought, were the two Miss Duffs of Muirtown—tall, graceful girls with a pensive air that made them very attractive. My next partner was Culduthel—poor Culduthel!—a fine, gay, good-natured, rattling young man. Then Lord Huntly in a reel *vis-à-vis* to his wife, then Sir Francis Mackenzie of Gairloch, then one or two of the Kinrara gentlemen, and all the rest of the evening Applecross—Mackenzie of Applecross, the last of his clever line. He was *the* catch of the north country from the extent of his property, and though very plain, sickly, and no great use as a dancing partner, he would have been, without a penny, a catch for any one worthy of him. Had he lived, he would have ably filled his position, but he and his only sister both died of consumption a few years after this, and before their parents. A writer in Edinburgh, with a large family, succeeded to that fine Ross-shire property.

Mr Cooper told us at breakfast that my first appearance had been a decided success. I was perfectly aware of it, and not one bit elated, though my mother was, and her maternal anxieties had gone farther than mine; I had stopped at abundance of dancing.

This evening's ball was pleasanter than the first; the third and last, with the supper, was best of all, even in spite of a drawback. Every joy has its attendant sorrow, every rose its thorn, and I had the persevering assiduities of a good-natured and rather vulgar person quite unable to see that his company was disagreeable. In no way could I escape two or three dances with this persistent young man, to my extreme annoyance, and, as it seemed to me, the unreasonable amusement of my new friend, Mr Mackenzie of Applecross.

The mornings had hung heavy to many, but not to me. Most people lounged about the narrow ill-paved streets, paid each other visits, or congregated in our northern emporium of fashion, Mr Urquhart the hair-dresser's shop. My father took my mother, Mrs Cooper, one of the girls, and me for charming drives in several directions; it was impossible to turn amiss, the whole surrounding scenery is so enchanting. We had visitors too, people calling early, before luncheon; Mrs Rose of Kilravock, the dowager, was one of them. An extraordinary woman, once a beauty and still a wit, who was matronising two elderly young ladies, West Indians of large fortunes, and amusing them and every one else with her clever eccentricities and tales of her brilliant youth. She had been often at Kinrara in former days with Jacky Gordon, the particular friend of the Duchess.

It was after our return home that Mrs Cameron of the Croft died,

CHAPTER XIV

1814-1815

I HAVE always looked on my appearance at the Inverness Meeting as the second era in my life, although at the time I was hardly aware of it. Our removal to the Highlands, our regular break-in under the governess, the partial opening of young minds, had all gone on in company with Jane, who was in many respects more of a woman than I who was by three years her elder. I was now to be alone, my occupations, habits, ideas were all to be different from, indeed repudiated by, the schoolroom. Miss Elphick thought me—and she was right—a year too young for the trials awaiting me, for which I was in no way prepared. She was annoyed at not having been consulted as to the fitness of her pupil for commencing life on her own account, and so she would neither help my inexperience nor allow me to take shelter under my usual employments.

I felt very lonely wandering about by myself, or seated in state in the library, with no one to speak to. My mother was little with me, her hours were late, her habits indolent; besides, she was busily engaged with my father revolving several serious projects for the good of the family, none of them proper for us to be acquainted with till they were decided on.

My father's Scotch friends were anxious that he should return to their Bar, and the state of his affairs, though none of us young people knew it, rendered some

such step necessary. Also my brother William had to look for a home while he remained in college. Mrs Gordon had had another baby, and in her small house there was no longer room for a lodger. Then there was the beautiful daughter! The pale thin girl had blossomed into beauty, and hopes were raised of the consequences of her being seen beyond the wilderness she had hitherto bloomed in.

So Edinburgh was decided on, and Grace Baillie was written to, to engage us a house.

When we went to take leave of Mr Cameron, he followed us down to the gate at the Lochan Mor; and there laying a hand on each young head, he bade God bless us with a fervour we recollected afterwards, and felt that he must have considered it as a final parting. Then wrapping his plaid round him and drawing his bonnet down over his eyes, he turned and moved away through the birch wood. He died during the winter, upwards of seventy-eight, young for a Highlander. Rothiemurchus altered after all that old set were gone.

We were in great glee over our preparations for Edinburgh, when one night we got a fright; one of the chimneys in the old part of the house took fire, a common occurrence—it was the way they were frequently cleaned! but on this occasion the flames communicated some sparks to a beam in the nearest ceiling, and soon part of the roof was in flames. None of us being in bed the house was soon roused, the masons sent for, and a plentiful supply of water being at hand all danger was soon over. My mother was exceedingly frightened, could not be persuaded to retire to her room, and kept us all near her to be ready for whatever might befall. At last, when calmer, we missed Miss Elphick; she was not to be found, and we feared some mischance had happened to her. After a good search she was discovered as far from the house as she could well get, dancing about on the lawn in her night-dress, without a shoe or a stocking on her; by which crazy proceeding she caught so severe a cold as was nearly the death of her. Jane said the whole scene

made a beautiful picture, and while the rest of us were trembling for the fate of the poor old house, she was admiring the various groups as they moved about in the flickering light of the blazing chimney.

We had no more adventures before we started on our journey, nor any incidents deserving of notice during our three days' travel, save indeed one, the most splendid bow from my odious partner, who, from the top of the Perth coach as it passed us, almost prostrated himself before the barouche. It was cold wretched weather, snow on the hills, 'frost in the plains, a fog over the ferry. We were none of us sorry to find ourselves within the warm cheerful house that Miss Baillie had taken for us, No. 4 Heriot Row. The situation was pleasant, though not at all what it is now. There were no prettily laid-out gardens then between Heriot Row and Queen Street, only a long strip of unsightly grass, a green, fenced by an untidy wall and abandoned to the use of the washerwomen. It was an ugly prospect, and we were daily indulged with it, the cleanliness of the inhabitants being so excessive that, except on Sundays and "Saturdays at e'en," squares of bleaching linens and lines of drying ditto were ever before our eyes. Our arrival was notified to our acquaintance and the public by what my father's brethren in the law called his advertisement, a large brass plate on which in letters of suitable size were engraved the words—

MR GRANT, ADVOCATE.

My father established himself with a clerk and a quantity of law-books in a study, where he soon had a good deal of work to do. He went every morning to the Parliament-house, breakfasting before nine to suit William, who was to be at Dr Hope's chemistry class at that hour, and proceed thence to Dr Brown's moral philosophy, and then to Mr Playfair's natural philosophy. A tutor for Greek and Latin awaited him at home, and in the evenings he had a good three hours' employment making notes and reading up. Six masters were

engaged for us girls, three every day; Mr Penson for the pianoforte, M. Elouis for the harp, M. L'Espinasse for French, Signor something for Italian, and Mr I forget who for drawing, Mr Scott for writing and ciphering, and oh! I was near forgetting a seventh, the most important of all, Mr Smart for dancing. I was to accompany my father and mother occasionally to a few select parties, provided I promised attention to this phalanx of instructors, and never omitted being up in the morning in time to make breakfast. It was hoped that with Miss Elphick to look after us, such progress would be made as would make this a profitable season for everybody. An eye over all was certainly wanted. My mother breakfasted in bed, and did not leave her room till mid-day. As I was not welcome in the school-room, my studies were carried on in the drawing-rooms, between the hours of ten, when breakfast was over, and one, when people began to call. It was just an hour for each master, and very little spare time at any other period of the day, invitations flowing in quick, resulting in an eternal round of gaieties that left us no quiet evening except Sunday.

Our visiting began with dinners from the heads of the Bar, the Judges, some of the Professors, and a few others, nearly all Whigs, for the two political parties mixed very little in those days. The hour was six, the company generally numbered sixteen, plate, fine wines, middling cookery, bad attendance and beautiful rooms. One or two young people generally enlivened them. They were mostly got through before the Christmas vacation. In January began the routs and balls; they were over by Easter, and then a few more sociable meetings were thinly spread over the remainder of the spring, when, having little else to do, I began to profit by the lessons of our masters. My career of dissipation was therefore but four months thrown away. It left me, however, a wreck in more ways than one; I was never strong, and I was quite unequal to all we went through. Mrs Macpherson, who came up with Belleville in March for a week or two, started when she saw me, and

frightened my mother about me. She had observed no change, as of course it had come imperceptibly. She had been surprised and flattered by my success in our small world of fashion. I was on the list of beauties ; it was intoxicating, but not to me, young and unformed as I was, and unused to admiration, personal beauty being little spoken of in the family. I owed my steadiness neither to native good sense nor to wise council. A happy temper, a genuine love of dancing, a little Highland pride that took every attention as due to my Grant blood, these were my safeguards.

The intimate friends of my father were among the cleverest of the Whigs ; Lord Gillies and his charming wife, John Clerk and his sister, Sir David and Lady Brewster—more than suspected of Toryism, yet admitted on account of the Belleville connection and his great reputation—Mr and Mrs Jeffrey, John Murray, Tommy Thomson, William Clerk. There were others attached to these brighter stars, who, judiciously mixed among them, improved the agreeability of the dinner-parties ; Lady Molesworth, her handsome sister Mrs Munro, Mrs Stein, Lady Arbuthnot, Mrs Grant of Kilgraston, etc. We had had the wisdom to begin the season with a ball ourselves, before balls were plenty. All the beaux strove for tickets, because all the belles of the season made their first appearance at it. It was a decided hit, my mother shining in the style of her preparations, and in her manner of receiving her company. Every one departed pleased with the degree of attention paid to each individually.

The return to the Bar had answered pretty well ; fees came in usefully. We gave dinners of course, very pleasant ones, dishes well dressed, wines well chosen, and the company well selected. My dress and my mother's came from London, from the little Miss Stewarts, who covered my mother with velvet, satin, and rich silks, and me with nets, gauzes, Roman pearl trimmings and French wreaths, with a few substantial morning and dinner dresses. Some of the fashions were curious. I walked out like a hussar in a dark

cloth pelisse trimmed with fur and braided like the coat of a staff-officer, boots to match, and a fur cap set on one side, and kept on the head by means of a cord with long tassels. This equipment was copied by half the town, it was thought so exquisite.

We wound up our gaieties by a large evening party, so that all received civilities were fully repaid to the entire satisfaction of everybody.

This rout, for so these mere card and conversation parties were called, made more stir than was intended. It was given in the Easter holidays, or about that time, for my father was back with us after having been in London. He had gone up on some appeal cases, and took the opportunity of appearing in his place in the House of Commons, speaking a little, and voting on several occasions, particularly on the Corn Law Bill, his opinion on which made him extremely unpopular with the Radical section of his party, and with the lower orders throughout the country, who kept clamouring for cheap bread, while he supported the producer, the agriculturist. His name as a Protectionist was remarked quickly in Edinburgh where there was hardly another member of Parliament to be had, and the mob being in its first excitement the very evening of my mother's rout, she and her acquaintance came in for a very unpleasant demonstration of its anger against a former favourite.

Our first intimation of danger was a volley of stones rattling through the windows, which had been left with unclosed shutters on account of the heat of the crowded rooms. A great mob had collected unknown to us, as we had music, and much noise from the buzz of conversation. By way of improving matters, a score of ladies fainted. Lady Matilda Wynyard, who had her senses always about her, came up to my mother and told her not to be frightened; the General, who had had some hint of the mischief, had given the necessary orders, and one of the company, a Captain Macpherson, had been already despatched for the military. A violent ringing of the door bell, and then the heavy tread of

soldiers' feet announced to us that our guard had come. Then followed voices of command outside, ironical cheers, groans, hisses, a sad confusion. At last came the tramp of dragoons, under whose polite attentions the company in some haste departed. Our guard remained all night and ate up the refreshments provided for our dismayed guests, with the addition of a cold round of beef which was fortunately found in the larder.

Next day quiet was restored, the mob molested us no more, and the incident served as conversation for a week or more.

The last large party of the season was given by Grace Baillie in her curious apartments on the ground floor of an old-fashioned corner house in Queen Street. The rooms being small and ill-furnished, she hit upon a strange way of arranging them. All the doors were taken away, all the movables carried off, the walls were covered with evergreens, through the leaves of which peeped the light of coloured lamps festooned about with garlands of coarse paper flowers. Her passages, parlours, bedrooms, cupboards, were all adorned *en suite*, and in odd corners were various surprises intended for the amusement of the visitors; a cage of birds here, a stuffed figure in a bower there, water trickling over mossy stones into an ivy-covered basin, a shepherdess, in white muslin a wreath of roses and a crook, offering ices, a Highland laddie in a kilt presenting lemonade, a cupid with cake, a gipsy with fruit, intricacies contrived so that no one might easily find a way through them, while a French horn, or a flute, or a harp from different directions served rather to delude than to guide the steps "in wandering mazes lost." It was very ridiculous, and yet the effect was pretty, and the town so amused by the affair that the wits did it all into rhyme, and half a dozen poems were written upon this Arcadian entertainment, describing the scenes and the actors in it in every variety of style. Sir Alexander Boswell's was the cleverest, because so neatly sarcastic. My brother's particular friend wrote the prettiest. In all, we beauties were enumerated with flattering

commendation, but in *the friend's* the encomium on me was so marked that it drew the attention of all our acquaintance, and unluckily for me opened my mother's eyes.

She knew enough of my father's embarrassments to feel that my "early establishment" was of importance to the future well-being of the rest of us. She was not sure of the Bar and the House of Commons answering together. She feared another winter in Edinburgh might not come, or might not be a gay one, a second season be less glorious than the first. She had been delighted with the crowd of admirers, but she had begun to be annoyed at no serious result following all these attentions. She counted the admirers, there was no scarcity of them, there were *eligibles* among them. How had it come that they had all slipped away?

Poor dear mother! while you were straining your eyes abroad, it never struck you to use them at home. While you slept so quietly in the mornings you were unaware that others were awake; while you dreamed of Sheffield gold, and Perthshire acres, and Ross-shire principalities, the daughter you intended to dispose of for the benefit of the family had been left to enter upon a series of sorrows which she never during the whole of her after-life recovered from the effects of.

It is with pain—the most extreme pain—that I even now in my old age revert to this unhappy passage of my youth. I was wrong; my own version of my tale will prove my errors; but at the same time I was wronged—ay, and more sinned against than sinning. I would pass the matter over if I could, but unless I related it you would hardly understand my altered character; you would see no reason for my doing and not doing much that had been better either undone or done differently. You would wonder without comprehending, accuse without excusing; in short, you would know me not. Therefore, with as much fairness as can be expected from feelings deeply wounded and ill-understood, I will recall the short romance which changed all things in life to me.

The first year William was at college he made the acquaintance of a young man a few years older than himself, son of one of the professors. His friend was tall, dark, handsome, engaging in his manners, agreeable in conversation, and considered to possess abilities worthy of the talented race to which he belonged. The Bar was to be his profession, more by way of occupation for him in the meanwhile than for any need he would have to practise law for a livelihood. He was an only son, his father was rich, his mother had been an heiress, and he was the heir of an old, nearly bedrid bachelor uncle who possessed a landed property on the banks of the Tweed.

Was it fair, when a marriage was impossible, to let two young people pass day after day for months together? My brother, introduced by his friend to the professor's family during the first year he was at college, soon became intimate in the house. The father was very attentive to him, the mother particularly liked him, the three sisters, none of them quite young, treated him as a relation. William wrote constantly of them, and talked so much about them when at the Doune for the summer vacation that we rallied him perpetually on his excessive partiality, my mother frequently joining in our good-humoured quizzing. It never struck us that on these occasions my father never entered into our pleasantry.

When we all removed to Edinburgh William lost no time in introducing his friend to us; all took to him; he was my constant partner, joined us in our walks, sat with us in the morning, was invited frequently, and sometimes asked to stay for the family dinner. It never entered my head that his serious attentions would be disagreeable, nor did it enter my mother's, I believe, that such would ever grow out of our brother-and-sister intimacy. I made acquaintance with the sisters and exchanged calls as young ladies did then in Edinburgh; and then I first thought it odd that the seniors of each family, so particularly obliging as they were to the junior members of each other's households, made no move towards an acquaintance on their own parts.

The gentlemen, much occupied with their affairs, were excusable, but the ladies—what could prevent the common forms of civility between them? I had by this time become shy of making any remarks on them, but Jane, who had marvelled too, asked my mother the question. My mother's answer was quite satisfactory. She was the latest comer, it was not her place to call first on old residents. I had no way of arriving at the reasons on the other side, but the fact of the non-intercourse annoyed me, and caused me frequently a few moments more of thought than I was in the habit of indulging in. Then came Miss Baillie's *fête*, and the poem in which I figured so gracefully. It was in every mouth, for in itself it was a gem. None but a lover could have mingled so much tenderness with his admiration.

On the poet's next visit my mother received him coldly. At our next meeting she declined his attendance. At the next party she forbade my dancing with him: "after the indelicate manner in which he had brought my name before the public in connection with his own, it was necessary to meet such forwardness with a reserve that would keep his presumption at a proper distance." I listened in silence, utterly dismayed, and might have submitted sorrowfully and patiently, but she went too far. She added that she was not asking much of me, for "this disagreeable young man had no attaching qualities; he was not good-looking, nor well-bred, nor clever, nor much considered by persons of judgment, and certainly by birth no way the equal of a Grant of Rothiemurchus!"

I left the room, flew to my own little attic (what a comfort that corner all to myself was then!), I laid my head upon my bed, vainly trying to keep back the tears. The words darted through my brain, "all false, quite false—what can it be? what will become of us?" Long I stayed there till a new turn took me, the turn of unmitigated anger. Were we puppets, to be moved about by strings? Were we supposed to have neither sense nor feeling? Was I so poor in heart as to be

able to like to-day, to loathe to-morrow? so deficient as to be incapable of seeing with my own eyes? This long familiar intimacy permitted, then suddenly broken upon false pretences! "They don't know me," thought I; alas! I did not know myself. To my mother throughout that memorable day I never articulated one syllable. My father was in London.

My first determination was to see my poet and inquire of him whether he were aware of any private enmity between our houses. Fortunately he also had decided on seeking an interview with me in order to find out what it was that my mother had so suddenly taken amiss in him. Both so resolved, we made the meeting out, and a pretty Romeo and Juliet business it ended in.

There *was* an ancient feud, a college quarrel between our fathers which neither had ever made a movement to forgive. It was more guessed at from some words his mother had dropped than clearly ascertained, but so much he had too late discovered, that a more intimate connection would be as distasteful to the one side as to the other.

We were young, we were very much in love, we were hopeful; life looked so fair, it had been latterly so happy, we could conceive of no old resentments between parents that would not yield to the welfare of their children. He remembered that his father's own marriage had been an elopement followed by forgiveness and a long lifetime of conjugal felicity. I recollected my mother telling me of the Montague and Capulet feud between the Neshams and the Ironsides, how my grandfather had sped so ill for years in his wooing, and how my grandmother's constancy had carried the day, and how all parties had "as usual" been reconciled. Also when my father had been reading some of the old comedies to us, and hit upon the Clandestine Marriage, though he effected to reprobate the conduct of Miss Fanny, his whole sympathy was with her and her friend Lord Ogleby, so that he leaned very lightly on her error. He would laugh so merrily too at the old ballads,

"Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad," "Low down i' the broom," etc. These lessons had made quite as much impression as more moral ones. So, reassured by these arguments, we agreed to wait, to keep up our spirits, to be true to each other, and to trust to the chapter of accidents.

In all this there was nothing wrong, but a secret correspondence in which we indulged was certainly not right. We knew we should meet but seldom, never without witnesses, and I had not the resolution to refuse the only method left us of softening our separation. One of these stray notes from him to me was intercepted by my mother, and some of the expressions employed were so startling to her that in a country like Scotland, where so little constitutes a marriage, she almost feared we had bound ourselves sufficiently to cause considerable annoyance, to say the least of it. She therefore consulted Lord Gillies as her confidential adviser, and he had a conference with Lord Glenlee, the trusted lawyer on the other side, and then the young people were spoken to, to very little purpose.

What passed in the other house I could only guess at from after-circumstances. In ours, Lord Gillies was left by my mother in the room with me; he was always gruff, cold, short in manner, and no favourite with me, he was therefore ill selected for the task of inducing a young lady to give up her lover. I heard him respectfully, of course, the more so as he avoided all blame of either of us, neither did he attempt to approve of the conduct of our elders; he restricted his arguments to the inexperience of youth, the insurmountable aversion of the two fathers, the cruelty of severing family ties, dividing those who had hitherto lived lovingly together, the indecorum of a woman entering a family which not only would not welcome her, but the head of which repudiated her. He counselled me, by every consideration of propriety, affection, and duty, to give "this foolish matter up."

"Ah, Lord Gillies," thought I, "did you give up Elizabeth Carnegie? did she give you up? When you

dared not meet openly, what friend abetted you secretly?" I wish I had had the courage to say this, but I was so abashed, so nervous, that words would not come. I was silent.

To my mother I found courage to say that I had heard no reasons which would move me to break the word solemnly given, the troth plighted, and could only repeat that we were resigned to wait.

Lord Glenlee made as little progress; he had had more of a storm to encounter, indignation having produced eloquence. Affairs therefore remained at a standstill. The fathers kept aloof—mine indeed was still in London; but the mothers agreed to meet and see what could be managed through their agency. Nothing satisfactory. I would promise nothing, sign nothing, change nothing, without an interview with my betrothed to hear from his own lips his wishes. As if my mind had flown to meet his, he made exactly the same reply to similar importunities. No interview would be granted, so there we stopped again.

At length his mother proposed to come and see me, and to bring with her a letter from him, which I was to burn in her presence after reading, and might answer, and she would carry the answer back on the same terms. I knew her well, for she had been always kind to me and had encouraged my intimacy with her daughters; she had known nothing of my greater intimacy with her son. The letter was very lover-like, very tender to me, very indignant with every one else, very undutiful and very devoted, less patient than we had agreed on being, more audacious than I dared to be. I read it in much agitation—read it, and then laid it on the fire. "And now before you answer it, my poor dear child," said this sensible and excellent woman, "listen to the very few words I must say to you," and then in the gentlest manner, but rationally and truthfully, she laid before me all the circumstances of our unhappy case, and bade me judge for myself on what was fitting for me to do. She indeed altered all my high resolves, annihilated all my hopes, yet she soothed while she probed, and she called

forth feelings of duty, of self-respect, of proper self-sacrifice, in place of the mere passion that had hitherto governed me. She told me she would have taken me to her heart as a daughter, for the good disposition that shone through some imperfections, and for the true love I bore her son, but her husband would never do so, nor endure an alliance with my father's child. They had been friends, intimate friends, in their college days; they had quarrelled, on what grounds neither had been known to give to any human being the most distant hint; but in proportion to their former affection was the inveteracy of their after-dislike. All communication was over between them, they met as strangers, and were never known to allude to each other. My father had written to my mother that he would rather see me in the grave than the wife of that man's son. Her husband had said to her that if that marriage took place he would never speak to his son again, never notice him, nor allow of his being noticed by the family. She told me her husband had a vindictive as well as a violent temper, and that she suspected there must be a touch of the same disposition in my father, or so determined an enmity could not have existed. They felt that they were wrong, as was evidenced by the extra attention each had paid the other's children. At their age she feared there was no cure. She came to tell me the whole truth, to show me that, with such feelings active against us, nothing but serious unhappiness lay before us, in which distress all connections must expect to share. She said we had been cruelly used, most undesignedly; she blamed neither so far, but she had satisfied her judgment that the peculiar situation of the families now demanded from me this sacrifice; I must set free her son, he could not give me up honourably. She added that great trials produced great characters, that fine natures rose above difficulties, that few women, or men either, wedded their first love, that these disappointments were salutary. She said what she liked, for I seldom answered her; my doom was sealed; I was not going to bring misery in my train to

any family, to divide it and humiliate myself, destroy perhaps the future of the man I loved. The picture of the old gentleman too was far from pleasing, and may have affected, though unconsciously, the timid nature that was now so crushed. I told her I would write what she dictated, sign Lord Glenlee's "renunciation," promise to hold no secret communication with her son. I kept my word; she took back a short note in which, for the reasons his mother would explain to him, I gave him back his troth. He wrote, and I never opened his letter; he came and I would not speak, but as a cold acquaintance. What pain it was to me those who have gone through the same ordeal alone could comprehend. His angry disappointment was the worst to bear; I felt it was unjust, and yet it could not be explained away, or pacified. I caught a cold luckily, and kept my room awhile. I think I should have died if I had not been left to rest a bit.

My father on his return from London never once alluded to this heart-breaking subject; I think he felt for me, for he was more considerate than usual. He bought a nice pony and took me rides, sent me twice a week to Seafield for warm baths, and used to beg me off the parties, saying I had been racketed to death, when my mother would get angry and say such affectation was unendurable—girls in her day did as they were bid without fancying themselves heroines. She was very hard upon me, and I am sure I did not provoke her; I was utterly stricken down. What weary days dragged on till the month of July brought the change to the Highlands!

Had I been left in quiet to time, my own sense of duty, my conviction of having acted rightly, a natural spring of cheerfulness, with occupation, change, etc., would have acted together to restore lost peace of mind, and the lesson, severe as it was, would have certainly worked for good, had it done no more than to have sobered a too sanguine disposition. Had my father's judicious silence been observed by all, how much happier would it have been for every one! Miss Elphick

returned to us in June, and I fancy received from my mother her version of my delinquencies, for what I had to endure in the shape of rubs, snubs, and sneers and impertinences, no impulsive temper such as mine could possibly have put up with. My poor mother dealt too much in the hard-hit line herself, and she worried me with another odious lover. Defenceless from being blamable, for I should have entered into no engagement unsanctioned, I had only to bear in silence this never-ending series of irritations. Between them, I think they crazed me; my own faults slid into the shade comfortably shrouded behind the cruelties of which I was the victim, and all my corruption rising, I actually in sober earnest formed a deliberate plan to punish my principal oppressor—not Miss Elphick, she could get a slap or two very well by the way. My resolve was to wound my mother where she was most vulnerable, to tantalise her with the hope of what she most wished for, and then to disappoint her. I am ashamed now to think of the state of mind I was in; I was astray indeed, with none to guide me, and I suffered for it; but I caused suffering, and that satisfied me. It was many a year yet before my rebellious spirit learned to kiss the rod.

In journeying to the Highlands we were to stop at Perth. We reached this pretty town early, and were surprised by a visit from Mr Anderson Blair, a young gentleman possessing property in the Carse of Gowrie, with whom our family had got very intimate during the winter. William was not with us, he had gone on a tour through the West Highlands with a very nice person, a college friend, an Englishman. He came to Edinburgh as Mr Shore, rather later than was customary, for he was by no means so young as William and others attending the classes, but being rich, having no profession, and not college-bred, he thought a term or two under our professors—our University was then deservedly celebrated—would be a profitable way of passing idle time. Just before he and my brother set out in their tandem with their

servants, a second large fortune was left to this favoured son of a mercantile race, for which, however, he had to take the ridiculous name of Nightingale.

Mr Blair owed this well-sounding addition to the more humble Anderson, borne by all the other branches of his large and prosperous family, to the bequest of an old relation. Her legacy was very inferior in amount to the one left to Mr Nightingale, but the pretty estate of Inchyra with a good modern house overlooking the Tay, was part of it, and old Mr John Anderson, the father, was supposed to have died rich. He was therefore a charming escort for my mother about the town; we had none of us ever seen so much of Perth before. We were taken to sights of all kinds, to shops among the rest, and Perth being famous for whips and gloves, while we admired Mr Blair bought, and Jane and I were desired to accept each a very pretty riding-whip, and a packet of gloves was divided between us. Of course our gallant acquaintance was invited to dinner.

The walk had been so agreeable, the weather was so extremely beautiful, it was proposed, I can hardly tell by whom, to drive no farther than to Dunkeld next morning, and spend the remainder of the day in wandering through all the beautiful grounds along the miles and miles of walks conducted by the river-side through the wood and up the mountains. "Have you any objection to such an arrangement, Eli?" said my father to me. "I, papa! none in the world." It just suited my tactics; accordingly so it was settled, and a very enjoyable day we spent. The scenery is exquisite, every step leads to new beauties, and after the wanderings of the morning it was but a change of pleasure to return to the quiet inn at Inver to dine and rest, and have Neil Gow in the evening to play the violin. It was the last time we were there; the next time we travelled the road the new bridge over the Tay at Dunkeld was finished, the new inn, the Duke's Arms, opened, the ferry and the inn at Inver done up, and Neil Gow dead.

Apropos of the Duke's Arms, ages after, when our

dear amusing uncle Ralph was visiting us in the Highlands, he made a large party laugh, as indeed he did frequently, by his comical way of turning dry facts into fun. A coach was started by some enterprising individual to run between Dunkeld and Blair during the summer season, which announcement my uncle read as if from the advertisement in the newspaper as follows: "Pleasing intelligence. The Duchess of Athole starts every morning from the Duke's Arms at eight o'clock. . . ." There was no need to manufacture any more of the sentence.

Our obliging friend left us with the consolatory information that we should meet again before the 12th of August, as a letter from Mr Nightingale had brought his agreement to a plan for them to spend the autumn in the Highlands. They had taken the Invereshie shootings, and were to lodge at the Dell of Killiehuntly with John and Betty Campbell.

Our first three weeks at home were very quiet, no company arriving, and my father being absent at Inverness, Forres, Garmouth, etc., on business. We had all our humble friends to see, all our favourite spots to visit. To me the repose was delightful, and had I been spared all those unkind jibes, my irritated feelings might have calmed down and softened my temper; exasperated as they continually were by the most cutting allusions, the persuasion that I had been most unjustly treated and was now suffering unjustly for the faults of others, grew day by day stronger and stronger, and estranged me completely from those of the family who so perpetually annoyed me. Enough of this; so it was, blame me who will.

After this quiet beginning our Highland autumn set in gaily. The 10th of August filled every house in the country in preparation for the 12th. Kinrara was full, though Lord Huntly had not come with the Marchioness; some family business detained him in the south, or he made pretence of it, in order that his very shy wife might have no assistance in doing the honours, and so rub off some of the awkward reserve

which so much annoyed him. Belleville was full, the inns were full, the farm-houses attached to the shootings let were full, the whole country was alive, and Mr Nightingale, Mr Blair, and my brother arrived at the Doune. Other guests succeeded them, and what with rides and walks in the mornings, dinners and dances in the evenings, expeditions to distant lochs or glens or other picturesque localities, the Pitmain Tryst and the Inverness Meeting, a merrier shooting season was never passed. So every one said. I do not remember any one person as very prominent among the crowd, nor anything very interesting by way of conversation. The Battle of Waterloo and its heroes did duty for all else, our Highlanders having had their full share of its glories.

We ladies went up for the first time this year to Glen Ennich, our shooting friends with us. The way lay through the birch wood to Tullochgrue, past Macalpine's well and a corner of the fir forest and a wide heath, till we reached the banks of the Luinach, up the rapid course of which we went till the heath narrowed to a glen, rocks and hills closed in upon us, and we came upon a sheet of water terminating the *cul de sac*, fed by a cataract tumbling down for ever over the face of the precipice at the end of it. All the party rode on ponies caught about the country, each rider attended by a man at the bridle-head.

A very pleasant day we passed, many merry adventures of course taking place in so singular a cavalcade. We halted at a fine spring to pass round a refreshing drink of whisky and water, but did not unload our sumpter-horses till we reached the granite-pebbled shore of the Loch. Fairy tales belong to this beautiful wilderness; the steep rock on the one hand is the dwelling of the Bodach of the Scarigour, and the castle-like row of precipitous banks on the other is the domain of the Bodach of the Corriegowanhill—titles of honour these in fairyland, whose high condition did not however prevent their owners from quarrelling, for no mortal ever gained the good graces of the one without offending the



GLEN ENNICH.

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other, loud laughing mockery ever filling the glen from one potentate or the other, whenever their territories were invaded after certain hours. Good Mr Stalker the dominie had been prevented from continuing his fishing there by the extreme rudeness of the Corriegowanthill, although encouraged by his opposite neighbour and fortified by several glasses of stiff grog. We met with no opposition from either ; probably the Laird and all belonging to him were unassailable. We had a stroll and our luncheon, and we filled our baskets with those delicious delicate char which abound in Loch Ennich, and returned gaily home in safety.

The Inverness Meeting was a bad one, I recollect, no new beauties, a failure of old friends, and a dearth of the family connections. My last year's friend, the new member for Ross-shire, Mr Mackenzie of Applecross, was at this Meeting, more agreeable than ever, but looking extremely ill. I introduced him by desire to my cousin Charlotte Rose, who got on with him capitally. He was a plain man, and he had a buck tooth to which some one had called attention, and it was soon the only topic spoken of, for an old prophecy ran that whenever a mad Lovat, a childless—, and an Applecross with a buck tooth met, there would be an end of Seaforth. The buck tooth all could see, the mad Lovat was equally conspicuous, and though Mrs— had two handsome sons born after several years of childless wedlock, nobody ever thought of fathering them on her husband. In the beginning of this year Seaforth, the Chief of the Mackenzies, boasted of two promising sons ; both were gone, died within a few months of each other. The Chieftainship went to another branch, but the lands and the old Castle of Brahan would descend after Lord Seaforth's death to his daughter, Lady Hood—an end of Caber-Feigh. This made every one melancholy, and the deaths of course kept many away from the Meeting.

CHAPTER XV

1815-1817

WE put all our home affairs in order for our long absence, and then we set out for Edinburgh. My father had taken there the most disagreeable house possible; a large gloomy No. 11 in Queen Street, on the front of which the sun never shone, and which was so built against behind that there was no free circulation of air through it. It belonged to Lady Augusta Clavering, once Campbell, one of the handsome sisters of the handsome Duke of Argyll, who had run off from a masquerade with a lover who made her bitterly repent she ever took him for a husband. It was comfortable within, plenty of rooms in it, four good ones on a floor, but they did not communicate. The drawing-room was very large, four windows along the side of it. There were, however, no convenient rooms for refreshments for evening parties, so during our stay in it nothing could be given but dinners, and very few of them, for none of us were in very good-humour. It was well for me that my little bedroom was to the sunny and quiet back of the house, and on the drawing-room floor, for I had to spend many a week in it. A long illness beginning with a cold confined me there during the early part of the winter, and when I began to recover I was so weakened that dear and kind Dr Gordon, who had attended me with the affection of a brother, positively forbade all hot rooms and late hours. It was a sentence I would have wished him to pronounce, for I was sick of those everlasting gaieties,

and with his encouragement and the assistance of a few other friends I was making for myself, I was able to find employment for my time infinitely more agreeable than that round of frivolous company.

We had two pieces of family news to raise our spirits. Uncle Edward and Annie Grant were married—not to each other! He in Bombay, now a Judge of the Sudder, had married a Miss Rawlins, the daughter of an old Madras civilian, a highly respectable connection; and she in Bengal, had become the wife of Major-General N——, commanding at Cawnpore, a King's Cavalry officer. I have quite forgot, I see, to mention that when we left London she had gone on a visit to Mrs Drury, the sister of Mr Hunter, husband of one of the Malings. Mrs Drury took such a fancy to her that she would not part with her, at least not to a house of business. She proposed to my father to equip her for India. She went out with Miss Stairs, sister to Lady Bury and Mrs Vine, and she was received by Mrs Irwine Maling, from whose house she married.

We were inundated this whole winter with a deluge of a dull ugly colour called Waterloo blue, copied from the dye used in Flanders for the calico of which the peasantry made their smock-frocks or blouses. Everything new was "Waterloo," not unreasonably, it had been such a victory, such an event, after so many years of exhausting suffering; and as a surname to hats, coats, trousers, instruments, furniture, it was very well—a fair way of trying to perpetuate tranquillity; but to deluge us with that vile indigo, so unbecoming even to the fairest! It was really a punishment; none of us were sufficiently patriotic to deform ourselves by wearing it. The fashions were remarkably ugly this season. I got nothing new, as I went out so little, till the spring, then white muslin frocks were the most suitable dress for the small parties then given. There was a dearth of news, too, a lull after the war excitement; or my feeling stupid might make all seem so. I know my memory recollects this as a disagreeable winter. The lawyers were busy with a contemplated

change in the Jury Court. Trial by jury in civil cases had not, up to this date, been the custom in Scotland. In penal cases the Scotch jury law so far differed from the English that a majority of voices convicted the prisoner; unanimity was unnecessary; and this, which many sagacious lawyers considered the better rule, was not to be interfered with, it was only to be extended to civil cases. The machinery of the Courts of Justice had of course to be slightly altered for this change of system. If I remember rightly, two new Barons were required, and a Chief Baron, whom we had never had before. Sir William Shepherd, from the London Bar, was sent in this capacity to set it all going. His very English wife came with him, and amused us more than I can tell with her cockneyisms. He was very agreeable. It may seem beyond the range of a girl of my then age to have entered into so grave a subject, but this sort of topic was becoming my business. I wrote quickly and clearly, and seldom made mistakes; my father, though he had a clerk, frequently found it suit him to employ me as his more private secretary. I even helped him to correct the press for some of his pamphlets, sought out and marked his references, and could be trusted to make necessary notes. I delighted in this occupation, and was frequently indulged in it both in town and country at such odd times as help was wanted. Indeed from henceforward I was his assistant in almost all employments—work much more to my mind than that eternal “outing.”

In July we returned to the Doune. We had not many visitors, so far as I recollect. The country was filled with half-pay officers, many of them returned wounded to very humble homes in search of a renewal of the health they had bartered for glory. A few of these had been raised to a rank they were certainly far from adorning; very unfit claimants got commissions occasionally in those war days. Lord Huntly had most improperly so advanced one or two of his servants' sons, and in the German legion there had been two lieutenants who began life as carpenter's

apprentices to Donald Maclean. One of these, Sandy Macbean, who lived the rest of his days at Guislich under the title of the *Offisher*, attended the church very smart, and dined once every season at our table as was now his due, had helped to alter the staircase with the same hands that afterwards held his sword.

Kinrara was very full this season, and very pleasant. The charming Duchess, whose heart was in the Highlands, had left orders to be buried on the banks of the Spey in a field she had herself planted out. Lord Huntly planted a few larch round the enclosure, but Lady Huntly laid out a beautiful shrubbery and extended the plantation, making paths through it. The grave was covered by a plain marble slab, but behind this rose a stunted obelisk of granite, having on its front by way of inscription the names of all her children with their marriages; this was by her own desire. Her youngest son, Alexander, died unmarried before herself; Lord Huntly she left a bachelor. Her four younger daughters had all made distinguished connections; the eldest, and the best bred amongst them, showed to less effect among the list of great names, but then she had two husbands to make up for their being commoners. The first, Sir John Sinclair of Murkle, was her cousin; they had one child only, the merry sailor son whom every one was fond of. The second husband was a Mr Palmer of Bedfordshire. The second daughter was Duchess of Richmond, the third Duchess of Manchester, the fourth Marchioness of Cornwallis, the fifth Duchess of Bedford. When the Duchess of Manchester was driven from the house of the husband she had disgraced, she left behind her two sons, and six daughters placed by their father under the care of a governess to be superintended by the Dowager Duchess; the boys were at Eton. The eldest of these girls, however, Lady Jane Montague, had almost always lived with her other grandmother, the Duchess of Gordon. She it was who danced the Shean Trews, and trotted over to the Doune on her pony as often nearly as she stayed at home. My father and mother were

dotingly fond of her, for she was a fine natural creature, quite unspoiled. When *our* Duchess, as we always called her, died, Lady Jane was not happy at home with her younger sisters and their governess; she went to live with her aunt the Duchess of Bedford, and was shortly announced to be on the point of marriage with the second of the Duke's three sons by his first wife—Lord William Russell. Next we heard she was very ill, consumptive—dying—and that kind aunt took her to Nice, and attended her like a mother till she laid her in her grave. It was a grief to every one that knew her, particularly those who had watched the fair show of her childhood.

The second of these deserted girls was now of an age to be introduced into society, and Lord and Lady Huntly brought her with them to Kinrara. No, it was the third, Lady Susan, a beautiful creature; the second, Lady Elizabeth, was just married to a handsome Colonel Steele, with whom she had become acquainted through her governess. It was on Lady Susan's account that Kinrara was made so particularly agreeable. There were plenty of morning strolls and evening dances, a little tour of visits afterwards, all ending in her engagement to the Marquis of Tweeddale, a man liked I believe by men, and it was said by some women—of extraordinary taste, to my mind; for, thick-set and square-built and coarse-mannered, with that flat Maitland face which when it once gets into a family never can be got out of it, he was altogether the ugliest boxer or bruiser-looking sort of common order of prize-fighter that ever was seen out of a ring. Yet he had a kind manner and a pleasant smile, and he made a tender husband to this sweet gentle creature, who accepted him of her own free will and never regretted the union.

Neither house went to the Tryst this year, nor to the Meeting. Lady Susan's approaching marriage prevented any public displays from Kinrara, and my father having been called to a distance on business the Doune did not care to exhibit without him.

In November 1816 we travelled back to Edinburgh to take possession of Sir John Hay's house in George Street, an infinitely more agreeable winter residence than Lady Augusta Clavering's very gloomy old barrack in Queen Street. It was an excellent family house, warm, cheerful, and airy, with abundant accommodation for a larger party than ours; but there was the same fault of only one drawing-room and a small study off it. Perhaps my father wanted no space for a ball. The town was much fuller than it had been before, of course gayer, many very pleasant people were added to our society. War was over, all its anxieties, all its sorrows had passed away, and though there must have been many sad homes made for ever, in a degree, desolate, these individual griefs did not affect the surface of our cheerful world. The bitterness of party still prevailed too much in the town, estranging many who would have been improved by mixing more with one another. Also it was a bad system that divided us all into small coteries; the bounds were not strictly defined, and far from strictly kept; still, the various little sections were all there, apart, each small set over-valuing itself and under-valuing its neighbours. There was the fashionable set, headed by Lady Gray of Kinfauns, Lady Molesworth unwillingly admitted, her sister Mrs Munro, and several other regular party-giving women, seeming to live for crowds at home and abroad. Lady Molesworth, the fast daughter of a managing manœuvring mother, very clever, no longer young, ran off with a boy at college of old Cornish family and large fortune, and made him an admirable wife—for he was little beyond a fool—and gave him a clever son, the present Sir William Molesworth. Within, or beyond this, was an exclusive set, the Macleods of Macleod, Cumming-Gordons, Shaw-Stewarts, Murrays of Ochtertyre, etc. Then there was a card-playing set, of which old Mrs Oliphant of Rossie was the principal support, assisted by her daughters Mrs Grant of Kilgraston and Mrs Veitch, Mr and Mrs Massie, Mr and Mrs Richmond (she was sister to Sir Thomas Liddell, Lord Ravens-

worth), Miss Sinclair of Murkle the Duchess of Gordon's first cousin and the image of her, Sam Anderson and others. By the bye, Mrs Richmond was the heroine of the queer story in Mr Ward's *Tremaine*, and she actually did wear the breeches. Then there was a quiet country-gentleman set, Lord and Lady Wemyss, all the Campbells, Lord and Lady Murray, Sir James and Lady Helen Hall, Sir John and Lady Stewart Hay, and so forth. A literary set, including college professors, authors, and others pleased so to represent themselves; a clever set with Mrs Fletcher; the law set; strangers, and inferiors. All shook up together they would have done very well. Even when partially mingled they were very agreeable. When primmed up, each phalanx apart, on two sides of the turbulent stream of politics, arrayed as if for battle, there was really some fear of a clash at times. We were so fortunate as to skim the cream, I think, off all varieties; though my father publicly was violent in his Whiggism he did not let it interfere with the amenities of private life, and my mother kept herself quite aloof from all party work.

The Lord Provost of Edinburgh was seldom in any of these sets; he was generally a tradesman of repute among his equals, and in their society he was content to abide. This year the choice happened to fall on a little man of good family, highly connected in the mercantile world, married to an Inverness Alves, and much liked. I don't remember what his pursuit was, whether he was a banker, or agent for the great Madras house his brother George was the head of, but he was a kind hospitable man, his wife Mrs Arbuthnot very Highland, and they were general favourites. He was chosen Provost again when his three years were out, so he received the king, George IV., on his memorable visit, and was made a baronet. Just before him we had had Sir John Marjoribanks of Lees, mercantile too. After him, the Town Council went back to their own degree. The name amongst us for Sir William Arbuthnot was *Dicky Gossip*, and richly

he deserved it, for he knew all that was doing everywhere to everybody, all that was pleasant to know; a bit of ill-nature or a bit of ill-news he never uttered. After a visit from him and his excellent wife—they were fond of going about together—a deal of what was going on seemed to have suddenly enlightened their listeners, and most agreeably. A tale of scandal never spread from them, nor yet a sarcasm. They, from their situation, saw a great deal of company and no parties could be pleasanter than those they gave.

There were very few large balls given this winter. Lady Gray, Mrs Grant of Kilgraston, Mrs Macleod, and a few others retained this old method of entertaining. A much more pleasant style of smaller parties had come into fashion with the new style of dancing. It was the first season of quadrilles, against the introduction of which there had been a great stand made by old-fashioned respectables. Many resisted the new French figures altogether, and it was a pity to give up the merry country dance, in which the warfare between the two opinions resulted; but we young people were all bit by the quadrille mania, and I was one of the set that brought them first into notice. We practised privately by the aid of a very much better master than Mr Smart. Finlay Dunn had been abroad, and imported all the most graceful steps from Paris; and having kept our secret well, we burst upon the world at a select reunion at the White Melvilles', the spectators standing on the chairs and sofas to admire us. People *danced* in those days; we did not merely stand and talk, look about bewildered for our *vis-à-vis*, return to our partners either too soon or too late, without any regard to the completion of the figure, the conclusion of the measure, or the step belonging to it; we attended to our business, we moved in cadence, easily and quietly, embarrassing no one and appearing to advantage ourselves. We were only eight; Mr White Melville and Nancy Macleod opposite to Charles Cochrane and me, Johnnie Melville and Charles

Macleod with Fanny Hall and Miss Melville. So well did we all perform, that our exhibition was called for and repeated several times in the course of the evening. We had no trouble in enlisting co-operators, the rage for quadrilles spread, the dancing-master was in every house, and every other style discarded. Room being required for the display, much smaller parties were invited. Two, or at most three, instruments sufficed for band, refreshments suited better than suppers, an economy that enabled the inviters to give three or four of these sociable little dances at less cost than one ball; it was every way an improvement. My mother gave several of these small parties so well suited to the accommodation of our house, and at no cost to my father, uncle Edward having sent her for the purpose of being spent in any way she liked upon her daughter, a hundred pounds.

At our little parties Jane came out amazingly; she was never shy, always natural and gay and clever, and though not strictly handsome, she looked so bright, so well, with her fine eyes and her rosy lips, she was in extreme request with all our beaux. To the old set of the two former winters I had added considerably during the course of this more sociable one, and Jane went shares whenever she was seen. She carried one altogether away from me, the celebrated Basil Hall. He had this very year returned from Loo Choo, had published his book, brought home flat needles, and cloth made from wood, and a funny cap which he put on very good-humouredly, and chop-sticks with which he ate very obligingly; in short, he did the polite voyager to no end. Jane was quite taken with him, so was Jane Hunter; Margaret Hunter and I used to be amused with them and him, and wonder how they could wait on the lion so perseveringly. He was the second son of Sir James Hall, a man not actually crazy, but not far from it; so given up to scientific pursuits as to be incapable of attending to his private affairs. They were in consequence much disordered, and they would have been entirely deranged but for the care of

his wife, Lady Helen. Sir James had lately published a truly ingenious work, an attempt to deduce Gothic architecture from the original wigwams made of reeds. The drawings were beautifully executed, not by himself, I fancy, and by them he showed clearly the fluted pillars of stone copied from faggots of osier, groined arches from the slender shoots bent over and tied together, buds originating ornaments; a fanciful theory maybe, yet with some show of reason in it.

Dr Hope was the professor of chemistry, an old admirer of my aunt Mary's, and still the flutterer round every new beauty that appeared. I preferred him to Professor Leslie because he was clean, but not to Professor Playfair; he, old, ugly, and absent, was charming, fond of the young who none of them feared him, glad to be drawn away from his mathematical difficulties to laugh over a tea-table with such as Jane and me. We were favourites too with Dr Brewster, who was particularly agreeable, and with John Clerk, who called Jane, Euphrosyne, and with Mr Jeffrey with whom we gradually came to spend a great deal of time. I had Lord Buchan all to myself though, he cared for no one else in the house. He lived very near us, and came in most mornings in his shepherd's plaid, with his long white hair flowing over his shoulders, to give me lessons in behaviour. If he were pleased he would bring out some curiosity from his pockets—a tooth of Queen Mary's, a bone of James the Fifth—imaginary relics he set great store by. How many flighty people there were in Scotland! Neither of his extraordinary brothers quite escaped the taint. Lord Erskine and Harry Erskine were both of them excited at times. At a certain point judgment seems to desert genius. Another friend I made this year who remembered to ask about me very lately, Adam Hay, now Sir Adam. He was Sir John Hay's third son when I knew him. John died, Robert the handsome sailor was drowned, so the baronetcy fell to Adam. Are not the memoirs of the old a catalogue of the deaths of many who were young with them? Adam Hay tried to shake my

integrity; he advocated, as he thought, the cause of his dearest friend, whose mother, dear excellent woman, having died, their sophistry persuaded them so had my promise. We had many grave conversations on a sad subject, while people thought we were arranging our matrimonial excursion. He told me I was blamed, and I told him I must bear it; I did add one day, it was no easy burden, he should not seek to make it heavier. His own sister, some time after this, succeeded to my place; lovely and most lovable she was, and truly loved I do believe. Adam Hay told me of it when he first knew it, long afterwards, and I said, so best; yet the end was not yet.

We had a visitor this spring, Colonel d'Este, whom we had not seen since the old Prince Augustus days. He was as natural as ever, asked himself to dinner, and talked of Ramsgate. He had not then given up his claim to royalty, therefore there was a little skilful arrangement on his part to avoid either assumption or renunciation. He entered unannounced, my father meeting him at the door and ushering him into the room, my mother, and all the ladies on her hint, rising till he begged them to be seated. Otherwise he conformed to common usage, and perhaps did not observe that we had no finger-glasses; which reminds me that a year or two after when Prince Leopold was at Kinrara, Lord Huntly, precise as he was, had forgotten to mention to his servants that nobody ever washed before royalty, and from the moment that this omission struck him, he sat in such an agony as to be incapable of his usual happy knack of keeping the ball going. Luckily some of the Prince's attendants had an eye to all, and stopped the offending crystals on their way. I don't know what brought Colonel d'Este to Scotland at that time of year, he was probably going to some of his mother's relations in the west. I remember Lord Abercrombie being asked to meet him, and after accepting, he sent an apology; "an unavoidable accident which happily would never be repeated" set us all off on a train of conjectures wide of the truth, the

newspapers next day announcing the marriage of this grave elderly friend of my father's.

We left Sir John Hay's house in May; he was coming to live in it himself with his pretty daughters; and we went for three months to the house of Mr Allan the banker, in Charlotte Square, just while we should be considering where to fix for a permanency. Mrs Allan was ill, and was going to some watering-place, and they were glad to have their house occupied. Before we moved we paid two country visits, my father, my mother, and I.

Our first visit was to Dunbar, Lord Lauderdale's, a mere family party, to last the two or three days my father and my Lord were arranging some political matters. They were always brimful of party mysteries, having a constant correspondence on these subjects. My mother had so lectured me on the necessity of being anything but myself on this startling occasion that a fit of *Kinrara feel* came over me for the first evening. I was so busy with the way I was to sit, and the proper mode to speak the few words I was to say, and the attention I was to pay to all the nods and winks she was to give me, that a fit of shyness actually came on, and my spirits were quite crushed by these preliminaries and the curious state of the household we fell upon. In the very large drawing-room in which the family sat there was plenty of comfortable furniture, including an abundance of easy-chairs set in a wide circle around the fire. Before each easy-chair was placed a stool rather higher than would have been agreeable for feet to rest on, but quite suited to the purpose it was prepared for—the kennel of a dog. I don't know how many of these pets the Ladies Maitland and their mother were provided with, but a black nose peeped out of an opening in the side of every stool on the entrance of a visitor, and the barking was incessant. At this time four daughters were at home unmarried, and two or three sons. One daughter was dead, and one had disposed of herself some years before by running away with poor, silly, and not wealthy Fraser

of Torbreck, then quartered at Dunbar with the regiment of militia in which he was a captain. This proceeding of the Lady Anne quite changed the face of affairs in her father's family.

Lord Lauderdale had rather late in his man-of-fashion life married the only child of one Mr Antony Tod, citizen of London; pretty she had never been; she was a nice little painted doll when we knew her, a cipher as to intellect, but her fortune had been very large, and she was amiable and obedient, and her lord, they said, became fond of her and of all the many children she brought him. He was not vain, however, either of her or of them, he had no reason; so he kept them all living in great retirement at Dunbar, never taking any of them with him to town, nor allowing them to visit either in Edinburgh or in their own neighbourhood, till the elopement of Lady Anne, the only beauty. From that sore time Lady Lauderdale and her remaining daughters lived much more in society. They had begun too to feel their own importance, and to venture on opposing my Lord, for Mr Tod was dead, and had left to each of his grandchildren, sons and daughters alike, £15,000; the rest to his daughter for her life, with remainder to her eldest son, Lord Maitland. To his son-in-law the Earl Mr Tod left nothing. Here was power to the weaker side, exerted, it was said, occasionally, but they were a united happy family, fondly attached to each other.

The square Maitland face was not improved by the Tod connection, though the family finances benefited by it. Sons and daughters were alike plain in face and short in person. Even Lady Anne, with her really lovely countenance, was a dwarf in size and ill-proportioned; but there was a very redeeming expression generally thrown over the flat features, and they had all pleasant manners. The second day went off much more agreeably than the first, although I had to bear some quizzing on the subject of gambling, and my horror of it. In the morning the young people drove, rode, or walked; before dinner the ladies worked a

little, netting purses and knotting bags ; the gentlemen played with the dogs. All the evenings were spent at cards, and such high play, brag and loo unlimited. It was nothing for fifty or a hundred pounds to change hands among them. I was quite terrified. My few shillings, the first I had called my own for ages, given me for the occasion in a new purse bought to hold them, were soon gone at brag, under the management of Captain Antony Maitland, R.N. He had undertaken to teach me the game, of which I had no knowledge, for we never saw cards at home except when a whist table was made up for Belleville ; and as the eternal cry "Anty ! Anty !" did not repair my losses, and I sturdily refused to borrow, declining therefore to play, and composing myself gravely to look on, they could hardly keep their countenances ; my whole fortune was such a trifle to them. It was not, however, my loss so much as what my mother would say to it that disturbed me. She was very economical in those little ways, and her unwonted liberality upon this occasion would, I knew, be referred to ever after as a bar to any further supplies, the sum now given having been so squandered. I sought her in her room before we went to bed to make the confession, fully believing it had been a crime. The thoughts of the whole scene make me laugh now, though I slept all the better then on being graciously forgiven "under the circumstances."

There was no company, only Sir Philip Dirom, arranging his marriage settlements with Lord Lauderdale, the guardian of the bride, the heiress Miss Henderson. He was a handsome man, gentlemanly, and rather agreeable, not clever in the least, and very vain. He had won honours in his profession—the navy—and his latest acquisition, a diamond star of some order, was the single object of his thoughts, after Miss Henderson's acres. Lord Lauderdale laid a bet that Sir Philip would not be two hours in the house without producing it ; nor was he. In the middle of dinner, having dexterously turned the conversation on the orders of knighthood, he sent the servant for it, sure, he

said, that some of the ladies would like to see the pretty bauble—one of the principal insignia of the Bath I suppose it was. Lord Maitland received and handed the little red case round with a mock gravity that nearly upset the decorum of the company. How little, when laughing at these foibles, did we foresee that the vain knight's great-niece was to be my cousin Edmund's wife, or fancy that he would be so kind, so generous, to that thoughtless pair!

The other visit was only for the day. We did not even sleep from home, but returned very late at night, for Almondell was twelve miles good from Edinburgh. Harry Erskine had added to a small cottage prettily situated on the river from which he named his retirement, and there, tired of politics, he wore away time that I believe sometimes lagged with him, in such country pursuits as he could follow on an income that gave him little beyond the necessities of life. He and Mrs Erskine had no greater pleasure than to receive a few friends to an early dinner; they had a large connection, a choice acquaintance, and were in themselves so particularly agreeable that, company or no, a few hours passed with them were always a treat.

In May we removed to Charlotte Square, a house I found the most agreeable of any we had ever lived in in Edinburgh; the shrubbery in front, and the peep from the upper windows at the back, of the Firth of Forth with its wooded shores and distant hills, made the look-out so cheerful. We were in the midst, too, of our friends. We made two new acquaintance, the Wolfe Murrays next door, and Sir James and Lady Henrietta Ferguson in my father's old house, in which Jane and I were born. Nothing could be pleasanter than our sociable life. The gaiety was over, but every day some meeting took place between us young people. My mother's tea-table was, I think, the general gathering point. In the mornings we made walking parties, and one day we went to Rosslyn and Lasswade, a merry company. Another day we spent at sea.

The Captain of the frigate lying in the roads

gallantly determined to make a return to Edinburgh for all the attention Edinburgh had paid him. He invited all left of his winter acquaintance to a breakfast and a dance on board. We drove down to the pier at Newhaven in large merry parties, where now the splendid Granton pier shames its predecessors, and there found boats awaiting us, such a gay little fleet, manned by the sailors in their best suits, and we were rowed quickly across the sparkling water, for it was a beautiful day, and hoisted up upon the deck. There an awning was spread, flags, etc., waving, a quadrille and a military band all ready, and Jane, who was in high good looks, soon took her place among the dancers, having been engaged by the little monkey of a middy who had piloted us over. The collation was below, all along the lower deck; we sat down to it at four o'clock, and then danced on again till midnight, plentifully served with refreshments hospitably pressed upon us by our entertainers. Sailors are so hearty, and every officer of the ship seemed to feel he had the part of host to play. There never was a merrier *fête*.

Jane always considered this her *début*. She was nicely dressed, was very happy, much admired, and danced so well. She and I were never dressed alike; indeed there was then so little resemblance between us that probably the same style of dress would not have become us. Her figure was not good, yet when any one with better taste than herself presided at her toilet, it could be made to look light and pleasing; her complexion was not good either, at least the skin was far from fair, but there was such a bright healthy colour in her rounded cheek, and such a pair of deep blue brilliant eyes, and such a rosy mouth which laughter suited, two such rows of even pearls for teeth, she well deserved her names, Euphrosyne and Hebe; and she was such a clever creature, had such a power of conversation, without pedantry or *blueism*, it all flowed so naturally from a well-stored head and warm honest heart. The little middy's fancy was not the only one she touched that day. We were, like the best bred of

the company, in half dress, with frocks made half high and with long sleeves. Jane's frock was abundantly flounced, but it had no other trimming; she wore a white belt, and had a hanging bunch of lilacs with a number of green leaves in her hair. My frock was white too, but all its flounces were headed with pink ribbon run through muslin, a pink sash, and all my load of hair quite plain. A few unhappy girls were in full dress, short sleeves, low necks, white satin shoes. Miss Cochrane, the Admiral's daughter, was the most properly dressed amongst us; she was more accustomed to the sort of thing. She wore a white well-frilled petticoat, an open silk spenser, and a little Swiss hat, from one side of which hung a bunch of roses. She and the dress together conquered Captain Dalling; they were married a few months after.



JANE.

CHAPTER XVI

1817-1818

EARLY in July we moved to a large house in Picardy Place, No. 8, with four windows in front, a great many rooms all of a handsome size, and every accommodation, as the advertisements say, for a family of distinction. My father took a lease of it for three years, hiring the furniture from Mr Trotter. It was a sad change to us young people, down in the fogs of Leith, far from any country walk, quite away from all *our* friends, and an additional mile from Craigcrook too, measuring both ways. We had got very intimate with Mr and Mrs Jeffrey, Jane and I, and we had frequently from Charlotte Square walked out to their beautiful old place on Corstorphine Hill, spent the day there, and returned late when any one was with us, earlier when alone. Mr Jeffrey was enchanted with Jane, he had never seen any girl like her; he liked me too, but he did not find me out till long after. He left me now more to Mrs Jeffrey and their little Charlotte, a pretty child in those days.

We had been at Craigcrook on a visit of some days, and William had come out to walk home with us to Picardy Place, looking strangely sad; on the way he told us there was very little hope of the life of Dr Gordon. What a shock it was! Our intimacy had continued unbroken from the hour of our first acquaintance, William and I more particularly having been very much with him. He had got on in his profession as he deserved to do, and had lately got a Chair in

the University and a full class, and they had left the old flat in Buccleuch Place in the Old Town off by the Meadows, and lived in a nice house in Castle Street. All was prospering with them, but he died. It was some kind of fever he had neglected the first symptoms of, and I believe he had injured himself by too exclusive a meat diet. He was the first physician who had ever tried checking a certain sort of consumptive tendency by high feeding; he had succeeded so well with patients requiring this extra stimulus that he tried the plan on himself. Deeply we lamented him; William felt the loss most sincerely, nor did any other friend, I think, ever replace him. Mrs Gordon was left with three children, and only tolerably well off. She was unable to remain in Castle Street. She therefore removed soon to some place in Ayrshire, where there was good and cheap education to be had for her boys. Gogar—or some such name—her little boy, died; so, I think, did her pretty Jane.

We went late to the Highlands and stayed very quietly there. Kinrara was deserted this season, Belleville less gay than usual, and we did not go to the Meeting. My mother was not in spirits, my father was far away; he went to Ireland to defend some rebels, trials that made a great stir at the time, being made quite a political battlefield. The junior counsel was Erskine Sandford, the Bishop's son, who went with us by the name of Portia, as it was his gown Mrs Henry Siddons borrowed when she acted that character; it fitted her well, for he was only about her size, and she did not look unlike him, as he was handsome, though so small. They were some weeks absent. While in the north of Ireland my father took up his quarters in the house of an old acquaintance, the Marquis of Donegal, whose brother, Lord Spencer Chichester, my mother was once expected to marry. The Marquis was in some perplexity about his own marriage; he was ultimately obliged to go to the serious expense of having an Act of Parliament passed to legalise it, the Marchioness having been under age

at the time it was celebrated. She was a natural child, so without a parent, consequently the Chancellor was her guardian. She had been brought up, indeed adopted, by a worthy couple somewhere in Wales; they supposed their consent sufficient, but it was not.

After a very short stay in the Highlands we all came up to Picardy Place the end of October 1817, to meet my father on his return from Ireland. We soon settled ourselves in our spacious house, making ourselves more really at home than we had hitherto felt ourselves to be in town, having the certainty of no removal for three years. Still we younger ones were not soon reconciled to the situation, all our habits being disturbed by the separation from the West End! Three winters we spent here, none of them worthy of particular note, neither indeed can I at this distance of time separate the occurrences of each from the others. The usual routine seemed to be followed in all. My father and his new, very queer clerk, Mr Caw, worked away in their law chambers till my father went up to London late in spring. The second winter he lost his seat for Grimsby, a richer competitor carried all votes, and for a few months he was out of Parliament. How much better it would have been for him had he remained out, stuck to the Bar, at which he really might have done well had he not left ever so many cases in the lurch when attending the House, at which he made no figure. He spoke seldom, said little when he did speak, and never in any way made himself of consequence. Only once, when all his party censured the Speaker, he made a little reputation by the polite severity of his few words, called by Sir Alexander Boswell his "bit of brimstone and butter," a witticism that ran through all coteries, almost turning the laugh against the really clever speech. He dined out everywhere with my mother while he was in Edinburgh, but hardly ever went out in an evening. He seemed, from his letters to my mother, to go a good deal into society while he was in London, dining at Holland House, Lord Lansdowne's, Lord Grey's, all the Whigs in fact,

for he got into Parliament again. The Duke of Bedford gave him Tavistock till one of his own sons should be ready for it.

Five or six dinners, two small evening parties, and one large one, a regular rout, paid my mother's debts in the visiting line each winter. She understood the management of company so well, every assembly of whatever kind always went off admirably at her house. We dined out a great deal, Jane and I taking the dinners in turns. We both went out in the evenings except when I could manage an escape, which was easier than formerly, my mother having given me up as a matrimonial speculation, and Jane really delighting in society. We got into a rather graver set than we had belonged to while in the sunshine of George Street and Charlotte Square, not quite giving up our gayer companions, but the distance from them was so great our easy sociable intercourse was much broken. In our own short street we knew only John Clerk, not then a judge, and his truly agreeable sister Miss Bessy. William, Jane and I half lived in their house. They never gave a dinner without one of us being wanted to fill the place of an apology, and none of us ever shirked the summons, feeling so at home, and meeting always such pleasant people; all the law set of course, judges, barristers, and writers; some of the literary, some of the scientific, and a great many county families. The drawing-rooms—four of them—were just a picture gallery, hung with paintings by the "ancient masters," some of them genuine! There were besides portfolios of prints, clever caricatures, and original sketches, these last undoubted and very valuable. John Clerk was a collector; a thousand curiosities were spread about. He made more of his profession than any man at the Bar, and with his ready money commanded the market to a certain extent. The latest purchase was the favourite always, indeed the only one worth possessing, so that it almost seemed as if the enjoyment was in the acquisition, not in the intrinsic merit of the object. A hideous daub called a Rubens, a crowd of fat children

miscalled angels, with as much to spare of "de quoi" as would have supplied the deficiencies of the whole cherubim, was the wonder of the world for ever so long; my wonder too, for if it was a Rubens it must have been a mere sketch and never finished. I think I have heard that at the sale of this museum on Lord Eldin's death, a great many of his best-loved pictures were acknowledged to be trash.

I did not like him; the immorality of his private life was very discreditable; he was cynical too, severe, very, when offended, though of a kindly nature in the main. His talents there was no dispute about, though his reputation certainly was enhanced by his eccentricities and by his personal appearance, which was truly hideous. He was very lame, one leg being much shorter than the other, and his countenance, harsh and heavy when composed, became demoniac when illumined by the mocking smile that sometimes relaxed it. I always thought him the personification of the devil on two sticks, a living, actual Mephistopheles. He spoke but little to his guests, uttering some caustic remark, cruelly applicable, at rare intervals, treasured up by everybody around as another saying of the wise man's deserving of being written in gold, Eastern fashion. When he did rouse up beyond this, his exposition of any subject he warmed on was really luminous, masterly, carried one away. The young men were all frightened to death of him; he did look as if he could bite, and as if the bite would be deadly. The young ladies played with the monster, for he was very gentle to us.

In the Parliament House, as the Courts of Justice are called in Scotland, he was a very tiger, seizing on his adversary with tooth and nail, and demolishing him without mercy, often without justice, for he was a true advocate, heart and soul, right or wrong, in his client's cause. Standing very upright on the long leg, half-a-dozen pair of spectacles shoved up over his forehead, his wickedest countenance on, beaming with energy, he poured forth in his broad Scotch a torrent of flaming

rhetoric too bewildering to be often successfully opposed. There was a story went of his once having mistaken a case, and so in his most vehement manner pleading on the wrong side, the attorneys (called writers with us) in vain whispering and touching and pulling, trying in their agony every possible means of recalling his attention. At last he was made to comprehend the mischief he was doing, so he paused for breath, re-adjusted his notes, probably never before looked at, held out his hand for the spectacles his old fat clerk Mr George had always a packet of ready, put them on, shoved them up over all the series sent up before, and then turning to the Judge resumed his address thus, "Having now, my lord, to the best of my ability stated my opponent's case as strongly as it is possible for even my learned brother"—bowing to the opposite counsel with a peculiar swing of the short leg—"to argue it, I shall proceed point by point to refute every plea advanced, etc., etc."; and so he did, amid a convulsion of laughter. As a consulting lawyer he was calm and clear, a favourite arbitrator, making indeed most of his fees by chamber practice.

The sort of tart things he said at dinner were like this. Some one having died, a man of birth and fortune in the west country, rather celebrated during his life for drawing pretty freely with the long-bow in conversation, it was remarked that the heir had buried him with much pomp, and had ordered for his remains a handsome monument: "wi' an epitaph," said John Clerk in his broadest Border dialect; "he must hae an epitaph, an appropriate epitaph, an' we'll change the exordium out o' respect. Instead o' the usual *Here lies*, we'll begin his epitaph wi' *Here continues to lie*." I wish I could remember more of them; they were scattered broadcast, and too many of them fell by the wayside. The sister who lived with him and kept his house must in her youth have been a beauty. Indeed she acknowledged this, and told how to enhance it, she had when about fifteen possessed herself of her mother's patch-box, and not content with one or

two black spots to brighten her complexion, had stuck on a whole shower, and thus speckled, had set out on a very satisfactory walk, every one she met staring at her admiringly. A deal of such quiet fun enlivened her conversation, adding considerably to the attraction of a well-bred manner. She painted a little, modelling in clay beautifully, sometimes finishing her small groups in ivory. She was well read in French and English classics, had seen much, suffered some, and reflected a great deal. She was a most charming companion, saying often in a few words what one could think over at good length. She was very proud—the Clerks of Eldin had every right so to be—and the patronising pity with which she folded up her ancient skirts from contact with the *snobs*, as we call them now, whom she met and visited and was studiously polite to, was often my amusement to watch. She never disparaged them by a syllable individually, but she would describe a rather *fast* family as “the sort of people you never see in mourning,” or “so busy trying to push themselves into a place and not succeeding.”

Sir Adam Ferguson was the son of the “Roman Antiquities”; another idler. He was fond in the summer of walking excursions in two or three localities where he had friends, in the Perthshire Highlands, along the coasts of Fife and Forfar, and in the Border country, the heights along the Tweed, etc. Mark the points well. His acquaintance were of all ranks. He had eyes, ears, observation of all kinds, a wonderful memory, extraordinary powers of imitation, a pleasure in detailing—acting, in fact—all that occurred to him. He was the bosom friend of Walter Scott; he and William Clerk lived half their time with the great novelist, and it was ungenerous in him and Mr Lockhart to have made so little mention of them in the biography, for most undoubtedly Sir Adam Ferguson was the “nature” from which many of those life-like pictures were drawn. We, who knew all, recognised our old familiar stories—nay, characters—and guessed the rich source that had been so constantly drawn on.

Waverley came out, I think it must have been in the autumn of 1814, just before we went first to Edinburgh. It was brought to us at the Doune, I know, by "little Jemmy Simpson," as that good man, since so famous, was then most irreverently called. Some liked the book, he said; he thought himself it was in parts quite beyond the common run, and the determined mystery as to the author added much to its vogue. I did not like it. The opening English scenes were to me intolerably dull and lengthy, and so prosy, and the persons introduced so uninteresting, the hero contemptible, the two heroines unnatural and disagreeable, and the whole idea given of the Highlands so utterly at variance with truth. I read it again long afterwards, and remained of the same mind. Then burst out Guy Mannering, carrying all the world before it, in spite of the very pitiful setting the gipsies, the smugglers, and Dandie Dinmont are surrounded by. Here again is the copyist, the scenery Dumfries and Galloway, the dialect Forfar. People now began to feel these works could come but from one author, particularly as a few acres began to be added to the recent purchase of the old tower of Abbotsford, and Mrs Scott set up a carriage, a barouche landau built in London, which from the time she got it she was seldom out of.

I was never in company with Walter Scott; he went out very little, and when he did go he was not agreeable, generally sitting very silent, looking dull and listless, unless an occasional flash lighted up his countenance. In his own house, he was another character, especially if he liked his guests. It was odd, but Sir Walter never had the reputation in Edinburgh he had elsewhere—was not the *lion*, I mean. His wonderful works were looked for, read with avidity, praised on all hands, yet the author made far less noise at home than he did abroad. The fat, vulgar Mrs Jobson, whose low husband had made his large fortune at Dundee by pickling herrings, on being congratulated at the approaching marriage of her daughter to Sir Walter Scott's son, said the young

people were attached, otherwise her Jane might have looked higher; "it was only a baronetcy, and quite a late creation."

Another family in the Clerks' set and ours were the Dalzels; they lived in a small house just behind Picardy Place, in Albany or Forth Street. They were a Professor's widow, her sister, and her sons and daughters, reduced in the short space of a few years to the one son and one daughter who still survive. Mary Dalzel played well on the pianoforte; there was no other talent among them. The Professor had been a learned but a singularly simple man. He had been tutor to either Lord Lauderdale or his eldest son, and they had a story of him which Lady Mary told us, that at dinner at Dunbar—a large party—a guest alluding to the profligacy of some prominent political character, Mr Dalzel broke in with, "There has not been such a rogue unchanged since the days of the wicked Duke of Lauderdale."

In York Place we had only the old Miss Pringles, chiefly remarkable for never in the morning going out together—always different ways, that when they met at dinner there might be more to say; and Miss Kate Sinclair; and two families which, all unguessed by us, were destined to have such close connection with us hereafter, Mrs Henry Siddons and the Gibson Craigs. Mrs Siddons was now a widow, living with her two very nice daughters and her two charming little boys, quietly as became her circumstances. She acted regularly, as main prop of the theatre on which the principal part of her income depended. She went a little into society. She had pleasure in seeing her friends in a morning in her own house, and the friends were always delighted to go to see her, she was so very agreeable. The girls were great friends of my sister Mary's; the little boys were my mother's passion, they were with us for ever, quite little pets. The Gibsons, who were not Craigs then, we got more intimate with after they moved to a fine large house Mr Gibson was building in Picardy Place when we went there. There were two sons, and

seven daughters of every age, all of them younger than the brothers.

Jane and I added to our private list of so-called friends Mr Kennedy of Dunare, whose sister wrote Father Clement, whose mother, beautiful at eighty, was sister to the mother of Lord Brougham, who himself married Sir Samuel Romilly's daughter and held for many years a high situation here in Ireland; Archy Alison, now Sir Archibald, heavy, awkward, plain, and yet foredoomed to greatness by the united testimony of every one sufficiently acquainted with him; his father, one of the Episcopal chaplains and author of a work on Taste, had married Mrs Montague's Miss Gregory, so there was celebrity on all sides.

It was a great addition to the quiet home society we were beginning to prefer to the regular gaiety, the having Mrs Cumming settled near us. Her two elder sons had already gone out to India, Alexander in the Civil Service, Robert in the Artillery, both to Bengal. The three younger it was necessary to educate better, as it was gradually becoming more difficult to get passed through the examinations, and all were destined for the East. George and Willie, intended for army surgeons, were to study medicine, and were also to have their manners formed by appearing occasionally in society. Willie made his entrance into fashionable life at a large evening party of my mother's. He was a handsome lad, very desirous of being thought a beau, so he dressed himself in his best carefully, and noticing that all the fine young men were scented, he provided himself with a large white cotton pocket-handkerchief of his mother's which he steeped in peppermint water, a large bottle of this useful corrective always standing on the chimney-piece in her room. Thus perfumed, and hair and whiskers oiled and curled, Willie, in a flutter of shyness and happiness, entered our brilliant drawing-room, when he was pounced on by Miss Shearer, the very plain sister of Mrs James Grant, an oldish woman of no sort of fashion and cruelly marked with the smallpox. "We'll keep together, Willie," said

Miss Shearer, at every attempt of poor Willie's to shake himself clear of such an encumbrance in the crowd. How Dr Cumming laughed at these recollections when he and I met again after a lifetime's separation! Up and down this ill-assorted pair paraded, Miss Shearer determined to show off her beau. "There's an extraordinary smell of peppermint here," said Lord Erskine to Mrs Henry Siddons, as the couple turned and twirled round to pass them, Willie flourishing the large pocket-handkerchief in most approved style. It was really overpowering, nor could we contrive to get rid of it, nor to detect the offending distributor of such pharmaceutical perfume, till next day, talking over the party with the Lady Logie, she enlightened us, more amused herself by the incident than almost any of the rest of us.

She was right to keep the bottle of peppermint where it could easily be found, as the sort of house-keeping she practised must have made a frequent appeal to it necessary. She bought every Saturday a leg of mutton and a round of beef; when the one was finished, the other was begun; the leg was roasted, the round was boiled, and after the first day they were eaten cold, and served herself, her daughter, her two sons, and her two maid-servants the week; there were potatoes, and in summer cabbage, and peas that rattled, in winter oranges, and by the help of the peppermint the family thrived. We never heard of illness among them; the minds expanded too, after their own queer fashion, even George, the most eccentric of human beings, doing credit to the rearing. He was so very singular in his ways, his mother was really uncertain about his getting through the College of Surgeons. She made cautious inquiries now and then as to his studies, attention to lectures, notes of them, visits to the hospital, preparation for his thesis and so on, and getting unsatisfactory replies, grew very fidgety. One day one of the medical examiners stopped her in the street to congratulate her on the admirable appearance made by her son George when he was passed at Surgeons' Hall; his answers had

been remarkable, and his thesis, dedicated to my father, had been No. 2 or 3 out of fifty. She was really amazed. "George," said she, when they met, "when did you get your degree? When did you pass your trials?" "Eh!" said George, looking up with his most vacant expression. "Oh, just when I was ready for them." "You never told me a word about it." "No? Humph! you'd have heard fast enough if I'd failed." That was all she could get out of him; but he told us, that seeing the door of the Surgeons' Hall open and finding it was an examining day, it struck him that he would go in and get the job over; it was very easy to pass, he added. He has since at Madras risen high in his profession, been twice publicly thanked for his care of the troops, made money, married a wife; yet when he was at home on furlough he acted more like Dominie Sampson than any other character ever heard of.

We had an odd family party sometimes—a Carr, a Goodchild, a Gillio, and Grace Baillie who thrice a week at least walked in at dinner-time. My brothers' young men's friends continued popping in morning and evening, when it suited them. Mary, now grown into a very handsome girl, did her part well in all home company. Johnnie also was made a little man of; he had a tutor for Latin, attended the French and drawing classes, read English History with Jane. We had given up all masters except the Italian and the harp, which last taught us in classes, and thereby hangs a tale.

Monsieur Elouis, the harp master, charged so much for his private lessons, that my mother suggested to him to follow the Edinburgh fashion of classes at so much a quarter, three lessons a week. He made quite a fortune. There were eight pupils in a class, the lesson lasting two hours. We three, the two Hunters, Grace Stein (afterwards Lady Don), Amelia Gillio and Catherine Inglis were his best scholars. We played concerted pieces doubling the parts, choruses arranged by him, and sometimes duets or solos, practising in

other rooms. The fame of our execution spread over the town, and many persons entreated permission to mount up the long common stair to the poor Frenchman's garret to listen to such a number of harps played by such handsome girls. One or two of the mammas would have had no objection, but my mother and Lady Hunter would not hear of their daughters being part of an exhibition. We went there to learn, not to show off. Miss Elphick, too, had her own ideas upon the subject. She always went with us, and was extremely annoyed by the group of young men so frequently happening to pass down the street just at the time our class dispersed, some of them our dancing partners, so that there were bows and speeches and attendance home, much to her disgust. She waited once or twice till the second class assembled, but the beaux waited too. So then she carried us all off a quarter of an hour too soon, leaving our five companions to their fate; and this not answering long, she set to scold M. Elouis, and called the Edinburgh gentlemen all sorts of names. In the midst of her season of wrath the door of our music room opened one day, and a large fine-looking military man, braided and belted and moustached, entered and was invited to be seated. Every harp was silent. "Mesdemoiselles," said M. Elouis with his most polished air of command, "recommence if you please; this gentleman is my most particular friend, a musical amateur, etc." Miss Elphick was all in a flame; up she rose, up she made us rise, gather our music together and driving us and Amelia Gillio before her, we were shawled and bonneted in less time than I am writing of it, and on our way downstairs before poor Monsieur had finished his apologies to the officer and the other young ladies. Never was little woman in such a fury. We never returned to the harp classes, neither did the Hunters, and very soon they were given up. It was certainly an unwarrantable liberty, an impertinence, and the man must either have been totally unaware of the sort of pupils he was to find, or else an ill-bred ignorant person. Poor Elouis never

recovered the mistake ; he had to leave for want of business.

Mr Loder brought an opera company with him, and gave, not whole operas—he had not strength enough for that—but very well got-up scenes from several most in favour. It was a most agreeable variety in a place where public amusements were but scantily supplied to the inhabitants. We had De Begnis and his wife, and scenes from Figaro, Don Giovanni, etc.; the rest of the artists were very fair, but I forget their names. Going into a music shop we saw on the counter two numbers of a new work—the opera of Don Juan arranged for two performers on the pianoforte ; the first attempt in a kind that had such success, and that brought good music within the power of the family circle. We secured our prize, Jane and I, hurried home, tried the first scena, were delighted, gave a week to private, very diligent study, and when we had it all by heart, the first afternoon my father came up to spend the *gloaming* napping in an easy-chair, we arrested his sleepy fit by “Notte e giorno,” to his amazement. He liked our opera better, I think, than “Sul margine d’un rio,” or “Ninetta cara,” for we had so lately heard all the airs we played that we were quite up to the proper style, and had ourselves all the desire in the world to give the music we loved the expression intended by our then favourite composer, Mozart.

Edinburgh did not afford much public amusement. Except these operas which were a chance, a stray concert now and then—catches and glees being the most popular—and the six Assemblies, there were none other. The Assemblies were very ill attended, the small room never half full, the large, which held with ease twelve hundred people, was never entered except upon occasion of the Caledonian Hunt Ball, when the members presented the tickets, and their friends graciously accepted the free entertainment. The very crowded dances at home, inconvenient, troublesome and expensive as they were, seemed to

be more popular than those easy balls, where for five shillings we had space, spring, a full orchestra, and plenty of light refreshments. I heard afterwards that as private houses became more fully and handsomely furnished, the fashion of attending the Assemblies revived.

CHAPTER XVII

1818-1819

THE first summer we were in Picardy Place, 1818, we girls remained there protected by Miss Elphick during the whole of it. When the fine weather came on in spring we had resumed our excursions to Craigcrook, and it was then we got so intimate with Basil Hall. We could not have been acquainted with him while we lived in George Street, because he only returned from his Loo Choo cruise late in the autumn of 1817. During the following winter we saw a good deal of him both before he went to London, and after they had tried to spoil him there, for he was made such a wonder of there, it was a miracle his head kept steady; but it was at Craigcrook that we became such friends. Cruel Lord Jeffrey limited his two young favourites to friendship; he forbid any warmer feelings, closeting Jane in his pretty cabinet, and under the shades of the wood on Corstorphine Hill, to explain all the family particulars. And then Basil went off to sea.

The Jeffreys generally went out on Friday evenings, or, at any rate, on Saturdays, to a late dinner at Craigcrook, and came back to town on Monday morning, till the 12th of July released him from law labours. Jane and I frequently went with them, sometimes for only one day, returning in the evening. We never met any lady there but Mrs George Russell occasionally; a clever woman, not to my mind agreeable. The men were John Murray, now and then his elder brother, Tommy Thomson, Robert Graeme, Mr

Fullerton till he married, William Clerk very seldom, Mr Cockburn always, John Jeffrey, the Moreheads now and then, chance celebrities, and a London friend at intervals. It was not a big-wig set at all. My father, Lord Gillies, and such-like dignitaries would have been quite out of place in this rather riotous crew; indeed, the prevailing free-and-easy tone did not altogether suit *me*. Individually, almost all of our party were agreeable, cleverly amusing. Collectively, there was far too much boisterous mirth for my taste. I preferred being with Mrs Jeffrey, that *naturally* charming woman, not then by any means sufficiently appreciated by those so much her inferiors. She and I spent our time gardening—she was a perfect florist—playing with little Charlotte, to whom all my old nursery tales and songs were new, preparing for the company, and chattering to each other. My gentlemen friends were William Murray of Henderland, and Robert Graeme of Lynedoch; they used to find Mrs Jeffrey and me out when we were weeding our borders, and often carry us off up the hill, Jane remaining queen of the bowling-green. How much she was admired by all those clever heads!

The dinners were delightful, so little form, so much fun, real wit sometimes, and always cheerfulness; the windows open to the garden, the sight and the scent of the flowers heightening the flavour of repasts unequalled for excellence; wines, all our set were famous for having of the best and in startling variety—it was a mania; their cellars and their books divided the attention of the husband; the wife, alas! was more easily satisfied with the cookery. Except in a real old-fashioned Scotch house, where no dish was attempted that was not national, the various abominations served up as corner dishes under French names were merely libels upon housekeeping. Mrs Jeffrey presented nothing upon her table but what her cook could dress; her home-fed fowl and home-made bread, and fine cream and sweet butter, and juicy vegetables, all so good, served so well, the hot things *hot*, the fruits cream, and

butter so cold, gave such a feeling of comfort every one got good-humoured, even cranky William Clerk. They were bright days, those happy summer days at Craigcrook.

Another country house we were very much in was one the Gibsons had a lease of, Woodside. It was six miles from town, a good ride. We went out early, stayed all day, and came back in the cool of the summer evening. They were kind people, the father and mother very little in our way, the sons not much, the seven daughters of all ages our great friends. Mrs Kaye and Jane drew most together, Cecilia and I; the little ones were pets, and very pretty ones.

In August my father and mother and William went to the Highlands. Johnnie accompanied M. L'Espinasse to France. The little monkey had a turn for languages, was making good progress in French, so as a reward this pleasant trip was arranged for him. We three young ladies were left to amuse ourselves and Miss Elphick. We were so quiet, so orderly, so very correct in our whole conduct during the absence of the heads of the family, that on their return my father was addressed in the Parliament House by our opposite neighbour, a writer who lived on a flat, a second storey, high enough for good observation, and assured by him of the perfect propriety of our behaviour.

In the early part of the Edinburgh summers a good many very pleasant, quiet parties went on among such of us as had to remain in town till the Courts rose in July. I remember several agreeable dinners at this season at the Arbuthnots, foreigners generally bringing their introductions about this time of year. At the Brewsters they had foreigners sent to them too, and they entertained them now, not in the flat where we first found them, but in their own house in Athole Crescent newly built out of the profits of the Kaleidoscope, a toy that was ridiculously the rage from its humble beginning in the tin tube with a perforated card in the end, to the fine brass instrument set on a stand, that was quite an ornament to the drawing-room. Had

Sir David managed matters well, this would have turned out quite a fortune to him; he missed the moment and only made a few thousand pounds; still they gave him ease, and that was a blessing. The little dinners at his house were always pleasant. *She* was charming, and they selected their guests so well and were so particularly agreeable themselves, I don't remember anywhere passing more thoroughly enjoyable evenings than at their house. He was then, and is still, not only among the first of scientific men, but in manners and conversation utterly delightful; no such favourite anywhere as Sir David Brewster, except at home or with any one engaged with him in business; nobody ever had dealings with him and escaped a quarrel. Whether he were ill, the brain over-worked and the body thus over-weighted, or whether his wife did not understand him, or did not know and exert herself, there is no saying.

I think it was about the May or June of this year that old Mrs Siddons returned to the stage for twelve nights to act for the benefit of her grandchildren. Henry Siddons was dead, leaving his affairs in much perplexity. He had purchased the theatre and never made it a paying concern, although his wife acted perseveringly, and all the Kemble family came regularly and drew good houses. His ordinary company was not good; he was a stick himself, and he would keep the best parts for himself, and in every way managed badly. She did better after his death; her clever brother William Murray conducting affairs much more wisely for her, and certainly for himself in the end, slow as she was in perceiving this. Some pressing debts, however, required to be met, and Mrs Siddons came forward. We were all great play-goers, often attending our own poor third-rates, Mrs Harry redeeming all else in our eyes, and never missing the stars, John and Charles Kemble, Young, Liston, Mathews, Miss Stephens, etc. But to see the great queen again we had never dreamed of. She had taken leave of the stage before we left London. She was little changed, not at all in appear-

ance, neither had her voice suffered ; the limbs were just hardly stiffer, more slowly moved rather, therefore in the older characters she was the finest, most natural ; they suited her age. Queen Katherine she took leave in. To my dying hour I shall never forget the trial scene ; the silver tone of her severely cold " My Lord Cardinal," and then on the wrong one starting up, the scorn of her attitude, and the outraged dignity of the voice in which she uttered " To *You* I speak." We were breathless. Her sick-room was very fine too. Then her Lady Macbeth, Volumnia, Constance—ah ! no such acting since, for she was nature, on stilts in her private life. " Bring me some beer, boy, and another plate," is a true anecdote, blank verse and a tragic tone being her daily wear.

Once when Liston was down I longed to see him in Lubin Log ; for some reason I could not manage it, and Mrs Harry let me go to her private box. He had been Tony Lumpkin in the play, and we were talking him over, waiting for his appearance in the farce. " I have heard," said I, " of his giving a look with that queer face of his, not uttering a word, yet sending people into convulsions of laughter not to be checked whilst he remained in sight." " Hush," said Mrs Harry, " here he comes." Enter Lubin from the coach with all his parcels. Between his first two inquiries for his "*numbrella*" and his "*'at*," he threw up at our hidden box, at *me*, the look—perfectly over-setting ; there never could be such another grotesque expression of fun since the days of fauns and satyrs, and when composure in a degree returned, a sly twinkle of one squinting eye, or the buck tooth interrupting a smile, or some indescribable secret sign of intelligence, would reach us and set us off again. We were ill with laughing. He played that whole farce to us, to Mrs Harry and me, and every one agreed he had surpassed himself.

The early part of the next summer, 1819, passed much in the same way as the one before ; sociable small parties among our friends in town, and visits to those in the country ; messages to the Abbey of course, and we

were always the messengers. My mother was very careful of the servants; Johnnie declared that one extremely rainy day when it was proper the Newcastle Chronicle should be returned to Mrs General Maxwell, my mother called out to him, "Johnnie, my dear, I wish you would run to George Street with this; it's such a dreadful day I don't like sending out poor Richard"—a colossus of a footman, weighing heavier every day from having nothing to do. Poor Johnnie! this very spring he maybe thought with regret of even Mrs Maxwell's newspaper, for my father took him up to town and sent him to Eton. They first paid a visit to the electors of Tavistock, and on their way spent a day with Dugald Stewart, who lived then near the Duke of Bedford's cottage at Endsleigh. The old philosopher predicted the boy's future eminence, although we at home had not seen through his reserve. He was idle, slow, quiet, passing as almost stupid beside his brilliant brother. "Take care of that boy, Grant," said Dugald Stewart at their parting; "he will make a great name for himself, or I am much mistaken." And has he not? Quiet he has remained, indolent too, and eccentric, but in his own field of action who is his parallel? My mother and I thought of no honourable future when our pet left us. We watched him from the window, stepping into the travelling chariot after my father in the new greatcoat that had been made for him, the little tearful face not daring to venture a last glance back to us. He was small of his age, and from being the youngest he was childish. We did not see him for sixteen months. He came back to us an Eton boy; how much those three small words imply! My poor mother, I can understand now the sob with which she threw herself back upon the sofa, exclaiming, "I have lost my Johnnie!" His cousin John Frere went to Eton at the same time, and our John spent all short holidays at Hampstead, only coming home to the Highlands once a year in the summer. The two cousins remained attached friends ever, and though widely separated, never lost sight of one another till poor John Frere died.

General N—— had returned home very soon after his marriage to our dear Annie. They had settled amidst his rich relations near Nottingham, who had all received her most kindly. We heard from her constantly and were always planning to meet, yet never managed it. My father had seen her with her two nice little boys, and found her perfectly happy; her general no genius, but an excellent man.

I cannot recollect much else that is worthy of note before our little tour upon the Continent. We set out in August, and were two months and a half away. My father was not inclined for such a movement at all, it was probably very inconvenient to the treasury, but my mother had so set her heart upon it, he, as usual, good-naturedly gave way. Johnnie was to spend his holidays with the Freres. Miss Elphick went to the Kirkman Finlays; her parting was quite a dreadful scene, screams, convulsions, sobs, hysterics. The poor woman was attached to some of us, and had of late been much more agreeable to the rest; but she was a plague in the house, did a deal of mischief, and was no guide, no help. She had been seven years with us, so there was a chain of habit to loosen at any rate.

CHAPTER XVIII

1820-1822

THE length of time that has passed since we made this pleasant little tour in the Netherlands has caused forgetfulness of a thousand details which always add so much to the interest of any account of the first impressions of a foreign country. In talking over our travels with our good friend Miss Bessy Clerk, we used to keep her laughing by the hour at several of our adventures. This winter in Edinburgh was our last, passed much as other winters ; the same law dinners before Christmas, the same balls after it. My mother was very kind to me and did not press me to go out. Jane, who delighted in company, and who was the most popular young lady in our society, was quite pleased to have most of the visiting. I was a good deal with Miss Clerk and the Jeffreys and the Brewsters, at whose house one day at a quiet dinner I met Sir John Hay and his daughter Elizabeth, looking so very pretty in the mourning she wore for her betrothed. He had died of quinsy while on circuit at Aberdeen the year before. She afterwards married Sir David Hunter Blair.

There were serious riots in the West country this spring of 1820, the yeomanry called out, troops sent to Glasgow—a serious affair while it lasted. Jane was out at dinner, my mother was reading to me, when with a grand fuss in came William Gibson to tell us the strife was over, and to show himself in all the bravery of his yeomanry uniform ; very handsome it was. He and I

had fallen out before we went abroad, and we never rightly fell in again. He was a little spoiled, known to be the heir of his wealthy father and still wealthier cousin, Mr Craig of Riccarton ; the idea, therefore, of his studying for the Bar struck us all as absurd. Of course he did not spend much time on his law books, and his father determined to send him to travel. My father and mother were sorry to see him go ; he was a favourite, and has turned out so as fully to justify their partiality.

There were many public rejoicings although private affairs had been gathering gloom. The old Queen Charlotte had died and George III. ditto. The Princess Charlotte had married and had died with her baby, and this had set all her royal uncles upon marrying to provide heirs to the throne. One after the other German princesses came over, and in this year began the births, to the supposed delight of a grateful country. We had long tiresome mournings and then the joy-bells—the old tale. But there were other losses more felt. Madame de Staël died, to the regret of Europe. We had heard so much of her through the Mackintoshes that we almost fancied her an acquaintance. I think the Duke of York must have died too, and Mrs Canning—but maybe this was later. I am confused about dates, having never made any memoranda to guide me. Altogether my recollections of these few last months in Edinburgh are rather confused and far from pleasant.

One morning my mother sent Jane and Mary with a message to the poor Carrs in the Abbey ; William was out elsewhere ; most of the servants were despatched on errands ; and then, poor woman, she told me there was to be an execution in the house, and that I must help her to ticket a few books and drawings as belonging to the friends who had lent them to us. We had hardly finished when two startling rings announced the arrival of a string of rude-looking men, who proceeded at once to business, however, with perfect civility, although their visit could not have been satisfactory, inasmuch as

nothing almost was personal property; the furniture was all hired, there was no cellar, very little plate. The law library and the pianoforte were the most valuable items of the short catalogue. I attended them with the keys, and certainly they were very courteous, not going up to the bedrooms at all, nor scrutinising anywhere very closely. When they were gone we had a good fit of crying, my mother and I, and then she told me for the first time of our difficulties as far as she herself knew them, adding that her whole wish now was to retire to the Highlands; for, disappointed as she had been in every way, she had no wish to remain before the public eye nor to continue an expensive way of living evidently beyond our circumstances. How severely I reflected on myself for having added to her griefs, for I had considerably distressed her by my heartless flirtations, entered on purposely to inflict disappointment. The guilt of such conduct now came upon me as a blow, meriting just as cruel a punishment as my awakening conscience was giving me; for there was no help, no cure for the past, all remaining was a better line of conduct for the future, on which I fully determined, and, thank God, lived to carry out, and so in some small degree atone for that vile flippancy which had hurt my own character and my own reputation while it tortured my poor mother. I don't now take all the blame upon myself; I had never been rightly guided. The relations between mother and daughter were very different then from what they are now. Our mother was very reserved with us, not watchful of us, nor considerate, nor consistent. The governess was an affliction. Thought would have schooled me; but I never thought till this sad day; then it seemed as if a veil fell from between my giddy spirits and real life, and the lesson I read began my education. Mary had also grieved my poor mother a little by refusing uncle Edward's invitation to India; Jane, by declining what were called good marriages; William, by neglecting his law studies. A little more openness with kindness might have done good to all; tart speeches

and undue fault-finding will put nothing straight, ever. We had all suffered from the fretfulness without knowing what had caused the ill-humour. It was easy to bear and easy to soothe once it was understood. We were all the happier after we knew more of the truth of our position.

It was easy to get leave to spend the summer in Rothiemurchus; it was impossible to persuade my father that he had lost his chance of succeeding at the Scotch Bar. He took another house in Great King Street, removing all the furniture and his law books into it, as our lease of No. 8 Picardy Place was out. My mother, who had charge of the packing, put up and carried north every atom that was our own. She had made up her mind to return no more, though she said nothing after the new house was taken. Had she been as resolute earlier it would have been better; perhaps she did not know the necessity of the case; and then she and we looked on the forest as inexhaustible, a growth of wealth that would last for ever and retrieve any passing difficulties, with proper management. This was our sunny gleam.

In July then, 1820, we returned to the Highlands, which for seven years remained the only home of the family. My mother resisted all arguments for a return to Edinburgh this first winter, and they were never again employed. She had begun to lose her brave heart, to find out how much more serious than she had ever dreamed of had become the difficulties in which my father was involved, though the full amount of his debts was concealed for some time longer from her and the world. Some sort of trust-deed was executed this summer, to which I know our cousin lame James Grant, Glenmoriston's uncle, was a party. William was to give up the Bar, and devote himself to the management of the property, take the forest affairs into his own hands, Duncan Macintosh being quite invalided, and turn farmer as well, having qualified himself by a residence of some months in East Lothian at a first-rate practical farmer's, for the care of the comparatively few acres



WILLIAM.

round the Doune. My father was to proceed as usual; London and the House in spring, and such improvements as amused him when at home.

My mother did not enjoy a country life; she had therefore the more merit in suiting herself to it. She had no pleasure in gardening or in wandering through that beautiful scenery, neither had she any turn for schools, nor "cottage comforts," nor the general care of her husband's people, though in particular instances she was very kind; nor was she an active housekeeper. She ordered very good dinners, but as general overseer of expenditure she failed. She liked seeing her hanks of yarn come in and her webs come home; but whether she got back all she ought from what she sent, she never thought of. She had no extravagant habits, not one; yet for want of supervision the waste in all departments of the household was excessive. Indolently content with her book, her newspaper, or her work, late up and very late to bed, a walk to her poultry-yard, which was her only diversion, was almost a bore to her, and a drive with my father in her pretty pony carriage quite a sacrifice. Her health was beginning to give way and her spirits with it.

William was quite pleased with the change in his destiny. He was very active in his habits, by no means studious, and he had never much fancied the law. Farming he took to eagerly, and what a farmer he made. They were changed times to the Highland idlers: the whole yard astir at five o'clock in the morning, himself perhaps the first to pull the bell, a certain task allotted to every one, hours fixed for this work, days set apart for that, method pursued, order enforced. It was hard, uphill work, but even to tidiness and cleanliness it was accomplished in time. He overturned the old system a little too quickly, a woman would have gone about the requisite changes with more delicacy; the result, however, justified the means. There was one stumbling-block in his way, a clever rogue of a grieve, a handsome well-mannered man, a great favourite, who blinded even William by his adroit flatteries. He came from Ayr-

shire, highly recommended by I forget whom, and having married Donald Maclean the carpenter's pretty daughter, called Jane after my mother, he had a strong back of connections all disposed to be favourable to him. He was gardener as well as griever, for George Ross was dead, and he was really skilful in both capacities.

The forest affairs were at least equally improved by such active superintendence, although the alterations came more by degrees. I must try and remember all that was done there, and in due order if possible. First, the general felling of timber at whatever spot the men so employed found it most convenient to them to put an axe to a marked tree, was put a stop to. William made a plan of the forest, divided it into sections, and as far as was practicable allotted one portion to be cleared immediately, enclosed by a stout fencing, and then left to nature, not to be touched again for fifty or sixty years. The ground was so rich in seed that no other course was necessary. By the following spring a carpet of inch-high plants would be struggling to rise above the heather, in a season or two more a thicket of young firs would be found there, thinning themselves as they grew, the larger destroying all the weaker. Had this plan been pursued from the beginning there would never have been an end to the wood of Rothiemurchus. The dragging of the felled timber was next systematised. The horses required were kept at the Doune, sent out regularly to their work during the time of year they were wanted, and when their business was done employed in carting deals to Forres, returning with meal sufficient for the consumption of the whole place, or to Inverness to bring back coals and other stores for the house. The little bodies and idle boys with ponies were got rid of. The mills also disappeared. One by one these picturesque objects fell into disuse. A large building was erected on the Druie near its junction with the Spey, where all the sawing was effected. A coarse upright saw for slabbing, that is, sawing off the outsides or backs of the logs, and several packs of saws which cut the whole log up at once into deals, were all arranged in

the larger division of the mill. A wide reservoir of water held all the wood floated or dragged to the inclined plane up which the logs were rolled as wanted. When cut up, the backs were thrown out through one window, the deals through another, into a yard at the back of the mill, where the wood was all sorted and stacked. Very few men and as many boys got easily through the work of the day. It was always a busy scene and a very exciting one, the great lion of the place, strangers delighting in a visit to it. The noise was frightful, but there was no confusion, no bustle, no hurry. Every one employed had his own particular task, and plenty of time and space to do it in.

The smaller compartment of the great mill was fitted up with circular saws for the purpose of preparing the thinnings of the birch woods for herring-barrel staves. It was a mere toy beside its gigantic neighbour, but a very pretty and a very profitable one, above £1000 a year being cleared by this manufacture of what had hitherto been valueless except as fuel. This circular saw-mill had been the first erected. It was planned by my father and William the summer they went north with my mother and left us girls in Edinburgh. The large mill followed, and was but just finished as we arrived, so that it was not in the working order I have described till some months later. An oddity, Urquhart Gale, imported a few years before, had entire charge of it, and Sandy Macintosh gave all his attention to the woods. He lived with his father at the Dell, and Urquhart Gale lived on one of the islands in the Druie, where he had built himself a wooden house surrounded by a strip of garden bounded by the water. Having set the staple business of the place in more regular order than it had ever been conducted in before, William turned his attention to the farm, with less success, however, for a year or two. More work was done and all work was better done, but the management remained expensive till we got rid of the grieve. In time he was replaced by a head ploughman from the Lothians, when all the others having learnt their places required less

supervision. William indeed was himself always at his post, this new profession of his being his passion. The order he got that farm into, the crops it yielded afterwards, the beauty of his fields, the improvement of the stock, were the wonder of the country. This first year I did not so much attend to his doings as I did the next, having little or nothing to do with his operations. Jane and I rode as usual. We all wandered about in the woods and spent long days in the garden, and then we had the usual autumn company to entertain at home and in the neighbourhood.

Our first guest was John, our young brother John, whom we had not seen since he went first to Eton. My mother, whose anxiety to meet her pet was fully equal to my sisters' and mine, proposed our driving to Pitmain, thirteen miles off, where the coach then stopped to dine. The barouche and four was ordered accordingly and away we went. We had nearly reached Kingussie when we espied upon the road a tall figure walking with long strides, his hat on the back of his head, his hair blowing about in the wind, very short trousers, and arms beyond his coat-sleeves—in fact an object: and this was John! grown five inches, or indeed I believe six—for he had been sixteen months away. He had carried up very creditable breadth with all this height, looking strong enough, but so altered, so unlike our little plaything of a brother, we were rather discomfited. However, we found that the ways of old had lost no charms for the Eton boy; he was more our companion than ever, promoting and enjoying fun in his quiet way, and so long as no sort of trouble fell to him, objecting to none of our many schemes of amusement. Old as we elder ones were, we used to join in cat concerts after breakfast; my mother always breakfasted in her room, my father had a tray sent to him in the study, or if he came to us, he ate hurriedly and soon departed. We each pretended we were playing on some instrument, the sound of which we endeavoured to imitate with the voice, taking parts as in a real orchestra, generally



LOCH-AN-EILAN COTTAGE.

contriving to make harmony, and going through all our favourite overtures as well as innumerable melodies. Then we would act scenes from different plays, substituting our own words when memory failed us, or sing bits of operas in the same improvisatore style. Then we would rush out of doors, be off to fish, or to visit our thousand friends, or to the forest or to the mill, or to take a row upon the loch, unmooring the boat ourselves, and Jane and I handling the oars just as well as our brothers. Sometimes we stopped short in the garden or went no further than the hill of the Doune, or maybe would lounge on to the farmyard if any work we liked was going on there. Jane had taken to sketching from nature and to gardening. I had my greenhouse plants indoors, and the linen-press, made over to my care by my mother, as were the wardrobes of my brothers. We were so happy, so busy, we felt it an interruption when there came visitors, Jane excepted; she was only in her element when in company. She very soon took the whole charge of receiving and entertaining the guests. She shone in that capacity and certainly made the gay meetings of friends henceforward very different from the formal parties of former times. Our guests this autumn of 1820 were Charles and Robert Grant (names ever dear to me), Sir David and Lady Brewster, and Mrs Marcet the clever authoress, brought to us by the Bellevilles. We gave her a luncheon in our cottage at Loch-an-Eilan, which much pleased her. Our cousin Edmund was with us this summer; he had helped us to fit up the cottage, whitewashing, staining, painting, etc. One of the woodmen's wives lived in it and kept it tidy. We had a pantry and a store-room, well furnished both of them, and many a party we gave there, sometimes a boating and fishing party with a luncheon, sometimes a tea with cakes of our own making, and a merry walk home by moonlight. Doctor Hooker also came to botanise and the sportsmen to shoot. Kinrara filled, and uncle Ralph and Eliza passed the whole summer with us. Mrs Ironside was at Oxford, watching with aunt Mary

the last days of Dr Griffith. Uncle Ralph was the most delightful companion that ever dwelt in a country house. Never in the way, always up to everything, the promoter of all enjoyment, full of fun, full of anecdote, charming by the fire on a wet day, charming out of doors in the sunshine, enthusiastic about scenery, unrivalled in weaving garlands of natural flowers for the hair, altogether such a prose poet as one almost never meets with; hardly handsome, yet very fine-looking, tall and with the manners and the air of a prince of the blood. He had lived much in the best society and had adorned it. Eliza was clever, very obliging, and her playing on the pianoforte was delightful. She had an everlasting collection of old simple airs belonging to all countries, which she strung together with skill, and played with expression. We had great fun this autumn; pony races at Kingussie and a ball at the cattle tryst, picnics in the woods, quantities of fine people at Kinrara, Lord Tweeddale and his beautiful Marchioness (Lady Susan Montague), the Ladies Cornwallis, kind merry girls, one of them—Lady Louisa—nearly killing uncle Ralph by making him dance twice down the haymakers with her; Mrs Rawdon and her clever daughter, Lady William Russell; Lord Lynedoch at eighty shooting with the young men; Colonel Ponsonby, who had gambled away a fine fortune or two and Lady Harriet Bathurst's heart, and being supposed to be killed at Waterloo, had his body while in a swoon built up in a wall of corpses, as a breastwork for some regiment to shoot over. Mrs Rawdon, rather a handsome flirting widow, taking uncle Ralph for a widower, paid him tender attentions and invited Eliza to visit her in London.

This was the summer of Queen Caroline's trial; the newspapers were forbidden to all of us young people; a useless prohibition, for while we sat working or drawing, my uncle and my mother favoured us with full comments on these disgusting proceedings. In September the poor creature died. None of the grandees in our neighbourhood would wear mourning

for her. We had to put on black for our uncle Griffith, and the good-natured world said that my father, in his violent Whiggery, had dressed us in sables, when, in truth, he had always supported the king's right to exercise his own authority in his own family. Mrs Ralph remained at Oxford to assist aunt Mary in selecting furniture, packing up some, selling the rest, and giving up the lodgings to the new master, Dr Rowley, our old friend of the pear-tree days. The two ladies then set out for Tannoehside, where aunt Mary was to pass her years of widowhood, uncle Ralph and Eliza hurrying back to meet them as soon as we had returned from the Northern Meeting in October.

At the end of this year my sisters and I had to manage amongst us to replace wasteful servants and attend to my mother's simple wants. The housekeeper went, in bad health, to the Spa at Strathpeffer, where she died; the fine cook married the butler, and took the Inn at Dalwhinnie, which they partly furnished out of our lumber room! My mother placed me in authority, and by patience, regularity, tact and resolution, the necessary reforms were silently made without annoying any one. It was the beginning of troubles the full extent of which I had indeed little idea of then, nor had I thought much of what I did know till one bright day, on one of our forest excursions, my rough pony was led through the moss of Achnahatanich by honest old John Bain. We were looking over a wide, bare plain, which the last time I had seen it had been all wood; I believe I started; the good old man shook his grey head, and then, with more respect than usual in his manner, he told all that was said, all that he feared, all that some one of us should know, and that he saw "it was fixed that Miss Lizzy should hear, for though she was light-some she would come to sense when it was wanted to keep her mamma easy, try to help her brothers, and not refuse a good match for herself." Poor, good, wise John Bain! A match for me! that was over, but the rest could be tried. "A stout heart to a stiff brae" gets up the hill.

I was ignorant of household matters; my kind friend the Lady Belleville was an admirable economist, she taught me much. Dairy and farm-kitchen matters were picked up at the Dell and the Croft, and with books of reference, honest intentions, and untiring activity, less mistakes were made in this season of apprenticeship than could have been expected. And so passed the year of 1821. Few visitors that season, no Northern Meeting, a dinner or two at Kinrara, and a good many visits at Belleville. William busy with the forest and farm.

1822 was more lively; William and I had got our departments into fair working order; whether he had diminished expenses, I know not; I had, beyond my slightest idea, and we were fully more comfortable than we had ever been under the reign of the housekeepers. Sir David and Lady Brewster were with us for a while, and Dr Hooker, and the Grants of course, with their quaint fun and their oddities and their extra piety, which, I think, was wearing away. In the early part of the year aunt Mary came to us from Tennesse, escorted by my father on his return from London. She found me very ill. I had gone at Christmas on a visit to our cousins the Roses of Holme, where I had not been since Charlotte's marriage to Sir John, then Colonel Burgoyne. There had been no company in the house for some time; I was put into a damp bed, which gave me a cold, followed by such a cough that I had kept my room ever since; the dull barrack-room, very low in the roof, just under the slates, cold in winter, a furnace in summer, only one window in it, and we three girls in it, my poor sisters disturbed all night by my incessant cough. Dr Smith, kind little man, took what care he could of me, and Jane, who succeeded to my "situation," was the best, the most untiring of nurses, but neither of them could manage my removal to a more fitting apartment. Aunt Mary effected it at once. We were all brought down to the white room and its dressing-room, the best in the house, so light, so very



MARY IRONSIDE.



RALPH IRONSIDE.

cheerful; I had the large room. The dear Miss Cumming Gordons sent up from Forres House a cuddy, whose milk, brought up to me warm every morning, soon softened the cough. Nourishing soups restored strength. In June I was on my pony; in August I was well. How much I owe to our dear, wise aunt Mary! she never let us return to the barrack-room; she prevailed on my father to have us settled in the old schoolroom and the room through it, which we inhabited ever after; had we been there before I should not have been so ill, for my mother lived on the same floor, and would have been able to look after us. She was very ill herself, in the doctor's hands, rose late, never got up the garret stairs, and was no great believer in the dangers of a mere cold.

Aunt Mary amused us by her admiration of handsome young men. One of the Macphersons of Ralea, and the two Clarkes of Dalnavert, John and William, were very much with us; they were dangerous inmates, but they did us no harm; I do not know that they did themselves much good. It is curious how these Highland laddies, once introduced to the upper world, take their places in it as if born to fill them. No young men school or college bred could have more graceful manners than John Clarke; he entered the army from his humble home at Dalnavert, just taught a little by the kindness of Belleville. He was a first-rate officer, became A.D.C., married a baronet's daughter, and suited well the high position he won. The brother William, a gentlemanly sailor, married a woman of family and fortune, and settled in Hampshire. The sisters, after the death of their parents, went to an aunt in South America, where most of them married well, the eldest to a nephew of the celebrated General Greene. All of them rose as no other race ever rises; there is no vulgarity for them to lose. Then came John Dalzel, a good young man, said to be clever, known to be industrious, educated with all the care that clever parents, school, college, a good society in Lord Eldin's house, could command; who,

grave, dull, awkward, looked of inferior species to the "gentle Celts."

This autumn King George the Fourth visited Scotland. The whole country went mad. Everybody strained every point to get to Edinburgh to receive him. Sir Walter Scott and the Town Council were overwhelming themselves with the preparations. My mother did not feel well enough for the bustle, neither was I at all fit for it, so we stayed at home with aunt Mary. My father, my sisters, and William, with lace, feathers, pearls, the old landau, the old horses, and the old liveries, all went to add to the show, which they said was delightful. The Countess of Lauderdale presented my two sisters and the two Miss Grants of Congalton, a group allowed to be the prettiest there. The Clan Grant had quite a triumph, no equipage was as handsome as that of Colonel Francis Grant, our acting chief, in their red and green and gold. There were processions, a review, a levée, a drawing-room, and a ball, at which last Jane was one of the ladies selected to dance in the reel before the King, with, I think, poor Captain Murray of Abercairney, a young naval officer, for her partner. A great mistake was made by the stage managers—one that offended all the southron Scots; the King wore at the levée the Highland dress. I daresay he thought the country all Highland, expected no fertile plains, did not know the difference between the Saxon and the Celt. However, all else went off well, this little slur on the Saxon was overlooked, and it gave occasion for a laugh at one of Lady Saltoun's witty speeches. Some one objecting to this dress, particularly on so large a man, "Nay," said she, "we should take it very kind of him; since his stay will be so short, the more we see of him the better." Sir William Curtis was kilted too, and standing near the King, many persons mistook them, amongst others John Hamilton Dundas, who kneeled to kiss the fat Alderman's hand, when, finding out his mistake, he called, "Wrong, by Jove!" and rising, moved on undaunted to the larger presence. One

incident connected with this time made me very cross. Lord Conyngham, the Chamberlain, was looking everywhere for pure Glenlivet whisky; the King drank nothing else. It was not to be had out of the Highlands. My father sent word to me—I was the cellarer—to empty my pet bin, where was whisky long in wood, long in uncorked bottles, mild as milk, and the true contraband *goût* in it. Much as I grudged this treasure it made our fortunes afterwards, showing on what trifles great events depend. The whisky, and fifty brace of ptarmigan all shot by one man, went up to Holyrood House, and were graciously received and made much of, and a reminder of this attention at a proper moment by the gentlemanly Chamberlain ensured to my father the Indian judgeship.

While part of the family were thus loyally employed, passing a gay ten days in Edinburgh, my dear, kind aunt and I were strolling through the beautiful scenery of Rothiemurchus. She loved to revisit all the places she had so admired in her youth. When attended by the train of retainers which then accompanied her progress, she had learnt more of the ancient doings of our race than I had been able to pick up even from dear old Mr Cameron. Aunt Mary was all Highland, an enthusiast in her admiration of all that fed the romance of her nature, so different from the placid comfort of her early home. Our strolls were charming; she on foot, I on my pony. We went long distances, for we often stopped to rest beside some sparkling burnie, and seated on the heather and beside the cranberries, we ate the luncheon we had brought with us in a basket that was hung on the crutch of my saddle. I was much more fitted to understand her fine mind at this time than I should have been the year before. My long illness, which had confined me for many months to my room, where much of the time was passed in solitude, had thrown me for amusement on the treasures of my father's library. First I took to light reading, but finding there allusions to subjects of which I was nearly ignorant, I chalked out for

myself a plan of really earnest study. The history of my own country, and all connected with it, in eras, consulting the references where we had them, studying the literature of each period, comparing the past with the present—it was this course faithfully pursued till it interested me beyond idea, that made me acquainted with the worth of our small collection of books. There was no subject on which sufficient information could not be got.

I divided my reading time into four short sittings, varying the subjects, by advice of good Dr Smith, to avoid fatigue, and as I slept little it was surprising how many volumes I got through. It was "the making of me," as the Irish say; our real mission here on earth had never been hinted to me. I had no fixed aim in life, no idea of wasted time. To do good, and to avoid evil, we were certainly taught, and very happy we were while all was bright around us. When sorrow came I was not fit to bear it, and I had to bear it all alone; the utmost reserve was inculcated upon us whenever a disagreeable effect would be produced by an exhibition of our feelings. In this case, too, the subject had been prohibited, so the long illness was the consequence, but the after-results were good.

It was new to me to think; I often lay awake in the early morning looking from my bed through the large south window of that pretty "White room," thinking of the world beyond those fine old beech trees, taking into the picture the green gate, the undulating field, the bank of birch trees, and the Ord Bain, and on the other side the height of the Polchar, and the smoke from the gardener's cottage; wondering, dreaming, and not omitting self-accusation, for discipline had been necessary to me, and I had not borne my cross meekly. My foolish, frivolous, careless career and its punishment came back upon me painfully, but no longer angrily; I learned to excuse as well as to submit, and kissed the rod in a brave spirit which met its reward.

My wise aunt found me a new and profitable employment. She set me to write essays, short tales,

and at length a novel. I don't suppose they were intrinsically worth much, and I do not know what may have become of them, but the venture was invaluable. I tried higher flights afterwards with success when help was wanted.

All this while, who was very near us, within a thought of coming on to find us out, had he more accurately known our whereabouts? he who hardly seven years afterwards became my husband. He was an officer of the Indian army at home on furlough, diverting his leisure by a tour through part of Scotland; he was sleeping quietly at Dunkeld while I was waking during the long night at the Doune. Uncle Edward, his particular friend, had so often talked of us to him that he knew us almost individually, but for want of an introduction would not volunteer a better acquaintance. It was better for me as it was. I know, had he come to Rothiemurchus, Jane would have won his heart; so handsome she was, so lively, so kind; a sickly invalid would have had no chance. Major Smith and Miss Jane would have ridden enthusiastically through the woods together, and I should have been unnoticed. All happens well, could we but think so; and so my future husband returned alone to India, and I had to go there after him!

CHAPTER XIX

1822-1826

AT the close of this autumn my aunt was to leave us to spend the winter with her old friend Mrs Lawrence at Studley. I was to go with her, Dr Smith thinking it would not be safe for me to risk the cold frosts of the Highlands. Mrs Lawrence very kindly wished me to remain with her during my aunt's visit, but Annie N—— had arranged with my father that I was to be her guest during this winter; it was a long-promised visit, so I could give only a month to Studley on my way to Sherwood Forest.

Before we left the Doune there had been a family council on weighty affairs. Our cousin Kate Ironside, the eldest of the Houghton family, who had been sent for to Bombay in the year 1819, had married well; her husband, Colonel Barnewell, an excellent man, was the Resident at Kairā, much considered in the service; he had permitted Kate to send for her two next sisters, Eliza and Mary, and uncle Edward wished my sister Mary to accompany them. She had been his pet in her babyhood. My father and mother were rather offended by the proposal, but left the decision to Mary herself; she declined of course for the present, leaving the matter open for future consideration, with the caution for which she was so remarkable. "There is no saying," she said, "but what Bombay might some day prove a godsend; life is dull enough here."

At this same time a writership offered by old Charles Grant to my brother John was refused, to my mother's

grief, for she had set her heart upon it. She had a craze for India, and would have despatched every boy and girl over whom she had any influence to that land of the sun. My father and William, and our aunt Mary too, thought that John's great abilities would ensure him employment at home, so this matter was postponed.

Towards the end of October my aunt and I set out upon our travels, escorted by my brother William. We went in the travelling chariot with our own horses, sleeping two nights upon the road, and we stayed a week in Edinburgh in our own house in King Street, which my father had lent to uncle Ralph.

We proceeded by coach to Carlisle, the first time I had ever set foot in a public carriage, and very disagreeable I found it. The country we passed through was delightful to us who were learned in ballad lore; Ettrick Shaws and Gala Water, the Braes of Yarrow and the Cowdenknowes, all spoke to us, though from a distance, as we passed on to merry Carlisle, which we reached too late and too sleepy to look at. Next day we passed on over the wolds to Greta Bridge and Kirby, and so on to Studley, where I remained till close on Christmas. William found the life too dull, so he set off to the N——s, with whom he remained till it was time to return for me.

At that season of the year old Mrs Lawrence lived nearly alone; her open-house style ended with the autumn. We found only a few intimate friends with her.

Mrs Lawrence was very kind to me. She sent a pianoforte to my room that I might practise in quiet; she gave me a key to the bookcases in the library, and often chose me as her companion in her morning rides. We rode two donkeys, she on Johnny, I on Jack. She rode first in an old duffle cloak of a grey colour and a black gipsy hat, encouraging her somewhat slothful steed with a brisk "Johnny, get on" every now and then. Jack required no stimulus. Thus we wandered on for hours through the beautiful grounds of Studley

Royal. It was one of the lions of Harrogate, and certainly its extensive old-fashioned gardens deserved a visit. There were lawns, thickets, laurel banks, lakes, grottoes, temples, statues, the beautiful old ruins of Fountains Abbey, kept most incorrectly clean and tidy as if washed and trimmed daily, and one old manor-house near it—a gem—now the residence of the game-keeper. The fruit gardens were large, the offices good, the house itself, though convenient, with many fine rooms in it, was hardly worthy of its surroundings.

It was very cold during my stay at Studley, frost and snow equal to the Highlands. William and I had a very chilly journey by coach after being set down—I forget where—out of Mrs Lawrence's comfortable chariot. Dear Annie was waiting for us at Doncaster, where William and I parted; he went back to Edinburgh. Annie took me to the pleasant jointure house of a Mrs Walker, where we spent the night, and were amused and amazed at the Christmas storeroom; it was as full as Mrs Lawrence's—blankets, flannels, greatcoats, cloaks, petticoats, stockings, all the warmth that the poor could want in the winter season. I did not think such wholesale charity wise; there can be no spirit either of independence or economy where the expectation of relief unearned is a habit.

Next day we reached Fountain Dale to dinner. It was a small house, with tiny, well-kept grounds planted out from a wide stretch of heath that had once been an oak forest. A chain of fish ponds, full of well-preserved fish, carp, tench, and such like, enlivened the scene. But though all was very tidy, there was no beauty either there or in the neighbourhood.

Berry Hill, belonging to Mr Thomas Walker, was the nearest house to Fountain Dale, just about three miles off across the heath, a climb the whole way. Mr and Mrs Walker were hospitable people, very kind, childless, so they surrounded themselves with relations. Their connections were all among the mercantile aristocracy of England, a new phase of life to me with my old Highland blood, and one at which I opened my

eyes with wonder. The profusion of money among all these people amazed poor me; guineas were thrown about, as *we* would not have dreamed of dealing with shillings. There was no ostentation, no great show anywhere, but such plenty, such an affluence of comforts, servants well dressed, well fed; eating, indeed, went on all day upstairs and downstairs, six meals a day the rule. Well-appointed stables, delightful gardens, lights everywhere, fires everywhere, nothing wanting, everything wished for was got; yet, though good-humoured and very kindly, they were not really happier one bit than those who had to consider pennies and could only rarely gratify their tastes.

Generally speaking, the generation which had made the money in the mills was more agreeable than the generation which had left the mills and was spending the well-earned money. The younger people were well educated—so-called—the men school and college bred, gentlemanly, up to the times; but there was a something wanting, and there was too much vivacity, too much noise, no repose. The young women were inferior to the young men; they were accomplished, in the boarding-school acceptation of the word, but *mind* there was not, and manners were defective—no ease. They were good, charitable, and highly pleased with their surroundings and with one another, and extremely proud of their brothers.

They had all well-filled purses. I do not remember hearing the amount of their regular allowances, but I do remember well the New Year's gifts at one Walker house. There were four young people of the family, and on lifting the breakfast plate each found a fifty-pound note underneath it. William left with me five pounds for my winter's pocket money. This cut a sorry figure by comparison.

General and Mrs N—— were not rich; they lived quietly, had a small establishment, and, to the credit of the rich relations, lived amongst them upon equal terms. Annie, indeed, was the great lady everywhere, and extremely beloved.

To say the truth, it was rather sleepy work this life in the forest, and yet the time passed happily. Annie was so bright, her four boys fine little fellows, and once a fortnight there was an oyster ploy; the particular friends were invited to meet a barrel of natives and Mr N——, the General's elder brother; by the bye, his wife was a nice, clever woman, unfortunately very deaf. At Berry Hill I once met Mr and Mrs Lempriere. He was a fat little lively man, the son of the "Classical Dictionary."

One visit I did enjoy; it was to the Strutts of Belper and Derby.

The Strutts were silk weavers. The principal establishment was at Belper, near Derby; such a pretty place, wooded banks and a river, and a model village, the abode of the workmen. Jediah Strutt, who had married a Walker, niece of the General's, was the manager and part owner of the Belper mills. He had an extremely pretty house in the village, with gardens behind it down to the river, and a range of glass-houses. There were schools, a hospital, an infirmary, a library, a chapel, and a chaplain of their own persuasion (they were Unitarians), all so liberally provided, Mrs Strutt and her young daughters so busy in all these departments, assisted by the dear old chaplain, who was really the soul of his flock. Then there was the mill; it was the first of the sort I had ever seen, and it made a great impression on me. I forget now whether the moving power was steam or the water of the little river, but the movements produced by either are not easily forgotten. It all seemed to me like magic: immense rooms full of countless rows of *teetotums* twirling away by themselves, or sets of cards in hundreds of hands tearing away at cotton wool of their own accord; smoothing-irons in long rows running out of the walls and sliding over quantities of stockings; hands without any bodies rubbing away over wash-tubs, and when people wanted to reach another storey, instead of stairs they stepped upon a tray, pulled a string, and up they went, or down, as suited them.

One huge iron-foundry was really frightful; the

Strutts manufactured their own machinery, and in this Cyclops den huge hammers were always descending on great bars of iron red hot, and the heat, and the din, and the wretched-looking smiths at work there made a disagreeable impression. It was a pleasant change to enter the packing-house. At this time large bales were being prepared for the Russian market; the goods were built up neatly in large piles, high above our heads—a rope was pulled, a weight came down, and the big bale shrank into a comfortable seat.

One of the Strutt family, an old uncle, a bachelor and an oddity, was so enamoured of his machinery that he had as much "magic" as possible introduced into his own house; roasting, baking, ironing, all that it was practicable so to manage was done by turning pegs; and being rather a heavy sleeper, a hand came out of the wall in the morning at a certain hour and pulled the bedclothes off him!

This old Mr Strutt was charming, very simple, very clever, very artistic in all his tastes; he had lived a great deal abroad, and at the close of those dreadful Napoleon wars had picked up gems of price of all kinds. His house was a museum; paintings, sculpture, china, inlaid woods, not too many, and all suitably arranged.

We went from this house next day on our way home to lunch at Mr Arkwright's, a beautiful little place in a valley; such a luncheon, with hothouse fruits. The old gentleman came out of his mill in his miller's dress and did the honours gracefully. We paid another visit to my old friend Tom Walker of the Scots Greys. He had married a pretty Irish wife, Constantia Beresford, left the army, and lived in a rather pretty place near Derby. At his house I met two agreeable young men, an Irish Mr Bowen, a dragoon, and Count Lapature, an oddity, but a clever one, though a little fine. Another very pleasant acquaintance was Colonel Pennington, an old Indian friend of the General's. He spent a couple of months at Fountain Dale, and left it to return to Bengal to make out the two years required to complete his thirty-two years of service.

He was an artillery officer, had commanded the force for some years, was thought a great deal of by military men, and was a clever, agreeable companion, but very plain, old, little, shabby-looking. We made him some marmalade, Annie and I, to remind him of his Scotch lady friends, and he wrote us some amusing verses in return. He was a furious hunter, and regretted nothing in England so much as his stud.

I rode once or twice to Newstead with Colonel Pennington. Colonel Wildman was not then settled there; it was undergoing repairs, having only just been bought from Lord Byron, and was a fine place certainly, well wooded, with a lake, gardens, and shrubberies, but flat, too flat.

Haddon Hall was more interesting and less attractive than Newstead. A large, ugly house, the reception-rooms on the third storey; they were small, low, and scantily furnished; nobody lived there, and the Duke of Devonshire's visits were far apart. One thing touched me: the Duke was childless, unmarried; beside the bed on which he lay when at Haddon was a small cot in which slept the little Cavendish boy who was to be his heir. I cannot recollect any other incidents of my life in Nottinghamshire.

In May I went up to London with the General. We travelled all night, and about 6 o'clock in the morning I was met on Hampstead Heath by my dear little aunt Frere in her "demi-fortune." Uncle Frere had given up his town house, and lived now in a villa on Hampstead Heath, a comfortable house, standing in a small square of pleasure-ground enclosed by high walls, shutting out all view of very pretty scenery; London in the distance with its towers and its steeples, and its wide-spreading streets, and the four or five miles between the great city and Hampstead Hill, a perfect confusion of so-called country residences.

Life at Hampstead was pleasant in a quiet way, everybody was so kind. We got up early, as my uncle had to go to chambers after breakfast, and we drove

into London nearly every day. We went to bed late, for we were often out at dinner, or at plays and concerts, and twice while I was there at the opera, a great treat for me.

My uncle and aunt were all kindness, the children were dear little things, good and clever. My uncle had a great reputation as a man of business; he was a kind, straightforward man, always intent upon giving pleasure to every one around him. My dear aunt was one of the "blessed" who are "pure in heart," and if any of us are ever to "see God" she will be of them, for her whole life on earth was a continued preparation for Heaven. Not a praying, stern, faquir-like life of self-imposed miseries, hardening the heart and closing it against all the gentle and beautiful influences created to be enjoyed by us; her Christian creed was "to do good and sin not"; self she never thought of except as a means of rejoicing others. She was in truth the minister of comfort to her circle, the sun of her sphere. She yielded to the habits she found, and she and all belonging to her were happy. What can we wish for more?

She had eight children at this time; John and George at school, fine boys, and two little men at school too, a day school, the lessons for which they sometimes prepared with me while I was with them. The two elder girls were nearly grown up, pretty, both of them, the two younger nice little bodies very fond of play. Anne was very clever.

At the opera I heard Curioni, Pasta, De Begnis, Camporesi, Madame Vestris, and Velluti. The Messiah was admirably given at the Hanover Square Rooms. Cramer, who was giving lessons to Miss Richards, called, at her request, to hear the Highland girl sing "Hanouer," took his violin, caught up the air, and then played lovely music of his own as a return for the Gaelic "Crochallan," and "Castle Airlie." Sir Robert Ainslie came often to hear the old Scotch ballads, and George Rose to get a listener to his translation of Ariosto, which proceeded but slowly, and never, I believe, was published.

Mr William Rose occasionally came to dinner, and that poor, mad poet, Coleridge, who never held his tongue, stood pouring out a deluge of words meaning nothing, with eyes on fire, and his silver hair streaming down to his waist. His family had placed him with a doctor at Highgate, where he was well taken care of.¹ A nephew of his, a fine young man, a great favourite with my uncle, often came to us on a holiday ; he was afterwards a great lawyer. Miss Joanna Baillie was a frequent visitor ; a nice old lady. Then we had Mr Irving of the unknown tongues, the most wonderful orator, eloquent beyond reason, but leading captive wiser heads. Men went to hear him and wondered. Women adored him, for he was handsome in the pulpit, tall and dark, with long black hair hanging down, a pale face set off with superb teeth, and a pair of flashing eyes. The little chapel he served was crammed with all the titles in London ; it was like a birthday procession of carriages, and such a crush on entering as to cause screaming and fainting, torn dresses, etc.

Hatley Frere firmly believed in this man's rhapsodies, kept him and his wife and their child in his house for ever so long, and brought them to us for a day. We thought them very dirty. He was busy at this very time calculating the year for the world to end. Happily the period fixed on passed away, to the exceeding relief of many worthy persons.

At a concert of ancient music to which my uncle and aunt kindly took me I saw another celebrity—the Duke of Wellington. He was standing talking with Rogers the poet, who seized on my uncle as he was passing to appeal to him on some subject they were discussing, and for five minutes I stood next the great Duke.

¹ As this passage has caused annoyance to some of Coleridge's family, the editor draws attention to the well-known fact that the poet's residence with Mr Gillman at Hampstead was purely voluntary. There are kindred inaccuracies scattered about the text, such as those on p. 139 relating to Shelley's departure from Oxford, which it was thought well to leave unnoticed, as being obvious hearsay and unlikely to mislead, owing to the abundance of evidence from other sources.

My father had pleasant lodgings in Duke Street, where I went when he wished me to see some of his own friends. He took me to the Mackintoshes, where I dined. Sir James was not at home; Lady Mackintosh was kind and agreeable, her daughter Fanny a nice girl, and Mrs Rich, Sir James's daughter by his first wife, both pleasant and clever. My father took me also to the Vines; he was a rich merchant, very underbred I thought; she, a quiet little woman, very kind to me. She took me to a grand review at Hounslow, where we went in Sir Willoughby Gordon's carriage. He was quartermaster-general, and intimate with Mr and Mrs Vine; they were his neighbours in the Isle of Wight. Of course we were well placed, in the reserve space next to the Duchess of Kent, a plain, colourless woman, ill dressed, whose little daughter, wrapped in a shawl, gave no promise of turning out our pretty queen.

My time for leaving my kind relations was drawing near. One way or another I had seen a good deal, and my uncle had been so good as to take me into his Latin class with the little boys, whose lessons I was thus able to help. I liked this much, and afterwards found my Latin very useful.

The Eton holidays were at hand. John Frere and my brother John were to spend them at the Doune. They were to travel with my father and me. How happy they were! We started by coach again (I was getting quite used to this vulgarity), passed through Oxford and thought of my aunt Mary, on to Liverpool to a good hotel, in the yard of which the boys, to their great delight, discovered a tank full of live turtle; a disgusting sight I thought it, such hideous, apathetic creatures. Next day we went on board the steamer for Glasgow.

My mother and my sisters left the Highlands soon after Christmas, and had been ever since staying with poor aunt Leitch, who was dying.

My father stayed only two days in Glasgow. Mary and I and the two boys accompanied him home, leaving Jane as a help to my mother and Charlotte. We went

by a fast coach that beautiful road past Stirling, Crieff, and Blair Drummond to Perth, where we got into the Caledonian coach, and so on by the old familiar road to our own gate, where a cart was waiting for our luggage. We walked the mile down the heathery brae to the boat at the Doune, and crossed our own clear, rapid Spey at our own ferry.

I was glad to get home ; I was ill. My mother was shocked at my appearance. Dr Smith and the Highland air and the quiet life soon restored me. Of course during my mother's absence for such a cause we saw no company beyond the Bellevilles or a stray traveller ; but while the boys were with us we were very happy, fishing, shooting, boating, riding, out of doors all day, and I had my flowers to set in order. Mary regretted Glasgow ; it was a life of variety much more to her mind than that we led at home. Still she managed to amuse herself.

I forget exactly when my mother and Jane returned, not before winter, I think.

The year 1825 was spent happily at the Doune in the usual way, William busy, John a season at college in Edinburgh boarded with M. L'Espinasse, and then off to Haileybury, the Indian College for Civil appointments, where he made a great name. Robert Grant got him the appointment, and there was no demur about it this time. We three girls were a great deal in Morayshire paying long visits, two of us at a time, to our many friends there. We were at Altyre, Relugas, Burgie, Forres House, etc. Altyre was very pleasant, so very easy. Sir William gave us a ball, which was extremely well managed, for they had amusing people staying with them, and they invited all the neighbourhood besides. And we had those strange brothers whose real name I can't remember, but they one day announced that they were Stuarts, lineally descended from Prince Charles, out of respect to whose wife, who never had a child, the elder brother assumed the name of John Sobieski ; the younger brother was Charles. Nobody was more astonished at this assumption than

their own father, a decent man who held some small situation in the Tower of London. The mother was Scotch; her people had been in the service of the unfortunate Stuarts in Italy, and who can tell if she had not some right to call herself connected with them? Her sons were handsome men, particularly John Sobieski, who, however, had not a trace of the Stuart in his far finer face. They always wore the Highland dress, kilt and belted plaid, and looked melancholy, and spoke at times mysteriously. The effect they produced was astonishing; they were *fêted* to their hearts' content; half the clans in the Highlands believed in them; for several years they actually *reigned* in the north country. At last they made a mistake which finished the farce. Fraser of Lovat had taken them up enthusiastically, built them a villa on an island in the Beaulieu Firth, in the pretty garden of which was a small waterfall. Here Mrs Charles Stuart sat and played the harp like Flora MacIvor, and crowds went to visit them. They turned Roman Catholic, to please their benefactor, I suppose, and so lost caste with the public. Poor Mrs Charles was a meek little woman, a widow with a small jointure whom the "Prince," her husband, had met in Ireland. I do not know what had taken him there, for no one ever knew what his employment had originally been. Prince Sobieski had been a coach-painter—not the panel painter, the heraldic painter—and most beautifully he finished the coats of arms.

Jane paid a long visit to Relugas, a lovely little place on a wooded bank between the Divie and the Findhorn, and then Sir Thomas and Lady Lauder, who were going to Edinburgh to a grand musical festival, took her with them, afterwards making a tour along the Border, a new country to Jane. One visit they paid was to Abbotsford. Jane was in an ecstasy the whole time. Sir Walter Scott took to her, as who would not? They rode together on two rough ponies with the Ettrick Shepherd and all the dogs, and Sir Walter gave her all the Border legends, and she corrected his mistakes about the Highlands. At parting he hoped

she would come again, and he gave her a small ring he had picked up among the ruins of Iona, with a device on it no one ever could make out.

Mrs Hemans was at Abbotsford, a nice, quiet, little woman, her two sons with her, fine little boys, quite surprised to find there was another *lion* in the world beside their mother!

The Lauders brought Jane home in great glee and stayed a week or more, during which time they held mysterious conferences and went rambles alone, and went on very queerly. I was sure that some secret business was in train, but could not make it out, as I was evidently not to be let into it. At last the discovery came—Sir Thomas was writing his first novel. The Hero was Mackintosh of Borlam, and most of his exploits were laid in the woods of Rothiemurchus and the plains of Badenoch. “Lochandhu” was really not bad; there were pretty bits of writing in it, but it was just an imitation of Sir Walter Scott. I believe the book sold, and it certainly made the author and his wife completely happy during its composition.

Lord Jeffrey, his wife, and Charlotte came to see us, and Lord Moncrieff, who won my heart, charming little old man! We all went to the Northern Meeting, all five of us; but without my father and mother. Glenmoriston took charge of us and his sister Harriet Fraser, and we went in a very fast style, escorted by Duncan Davidson, who arrived unexpectedly for the purpose.

Mary was the beauty of the meeting. She had grown up very handsome, and never lost her looks; she had become lively, and, to the amazement of the family, outshone us all. She was in fact a genius and a fine creature—poor Mary!

In the autumn of 1826, besides our usual visitors, we had Alexander Cumming to bid us good-bye before returning to India, a fine, very handsome man, whom on account of the entail it was intended to marry to Mary, but they did not take to one another. The

L'Espinasses came, she very absurd, he a clever Frenchman; and Lord Macdonald, six feet four; and Annie N——; what a happy summer we spent with her, all the people so delighted to see the Colonel's daughter!

Later came her husband the General, and his friend Colonel Pennington, who had been to India and back since he and I parted in Sherwood Forest. He was a very clever man, and very good, and very agreeable, but old and ugly. How could a young, brilliant creature like my sister Jane, so formed to be a young man's pride, fall to be this old man's darling! But so it was; she did it of her own free will, and I don't believe she ever repented the step she was determined to take. It was an unsuitable marriage, distasteful to all of us, yet it turned out well; she was content.

The N——s left us in October, taking with them Mary, who was to spend the winter at Fountain Dale. They intended to steam from Inverness to Glasgow and Liverpool; luckily this plan was given up; the steamer was wrecked and nearly all on board were drowned. I don't remember any cabin passenger being saved except John Peter Grant of Laggan—the only remaining child of nineteen born to the minister and his celebrated wife—and young Glengarry. Among the lost was one of the pretty Miss Duffs of Muirtown, just married to her handsome soldier husband, and on their way to join his regiment; their bodies were found clasped together, poor things, beside many others unknown.

Colonel Pennington had outstayed his friends; he and Jane wandered all over Rothiemurchus, apparently delighted with each other. At last he went.

It must have been in September 1825 that the N——s and Colonel Pennington left us. Johnnie had gone back to college, and our diminished party felt dull enough; a weight was on all our minds. We were sitting at dinner on a chill autumn evening, enlivened by a bright wood fire, and some of the cheerful sallies of William, who ever did his best to keep the ball up.

The post came in; I gave the key; Robert Allan opened the bag and proceeded to distribute its contents, dropping first one thick letter into a flagon on the side-board, as William's quick eye noted, though he said nothing. When we all seemed occupied with our own despatches he carried this letter to Jane. It was the proposal from her Colonel. She expected it, turned pale, but kept her secret for two days, even from me, who shared her room. She then mentioned her *engagement* to my father first, my mother next, and left it to them to inform William and me. There never was such astonishment. I could not believe it; William laughed; my father made no objection; my mother would not listen to the subject. More letters arrived, to Jane daily, to William and me full of kind expressions, to my father and mother, hoping for their consent. My father replied for all; my mother would not write; William and I put it off. Annie wrote to dissuade Jane, Lord Jeffrey and Miss Clerk to approve, the lover to announce his preparations. My father and William went to Edinburgh to draw up the settlements. It was found that the fortune was much smaller than had been expected, and from another source we heard that my father would not have been sorry to have offended the bridegroom, but he was not to be offended; his firm intention was to secure his wife, and he would have thought the world well lost to gain her. Her interests were well cared for, why not?—if old men will marry young women, young widows should be left quite independent as some return for the sacrifice, the full extent of which they are not aware of till too late. Well, the settlements were made by Sir James Gibson Craig, who well knew how to second my father in arranging them. After all, the couple were not badly off—the retiring pay of a full colonel with the off reckonings, £25,000 in the Indian funds, and a prospect of Deccan prize-money—some few hundred pounds which he did not get till the year before he died.

My mother wrote many letters to Edinburgh; she

certainly did not wish to forward matters, but this spirited pair wanted no help. The bride asked whether she could be provided with some additions to a rather scanty wardrobe. The bridegroom set out for the Highlands and had the banns published in *Edinburgh* on his way; a mistake of his man of business that was very annoying to all and caused some irritation. However all got right; Jane was determined; she had argued the point in her own strong mind, decided it, and it was to be. Perhaps she was not wrong; the circumstances of the family were deplorable, there did not appear to be any hope of better days, for the daughters at any rate, and we were no longer very young. So a handsome trousseau was ordered, our great-uncle the Captain, kind old man, having left each of us £100 for the purpose.

Colonel Pennington announced that he was engaged to dine with his brother in London on Christmas Day, so the wedding was fixed for the 20th of December 1825.

It was a cold, dull morning. I had been up all night preparing the breakfast, for our upper servants were gone, had been gone since the spring. Miss Elphick, poor soul, had come to be present at the first marriage amongst us. Since she left us she had been with the Kirkman Finlays in Glasgow. She assisted my labours by torrents of tears. The Bellevilles were the only guests, Mrs Macpherson so sad.

The ceremony was performed in the library by Mr Fyvie, the young Episcopal clergyman from Inverness. My mother's whole face was swollen from weeping; I was a ghost; William very grave; my poor father, the unhappy cause of our sorrow, did look heart-broken when he gave that bright child of his away. The bridegroom wore his artillery uniform, which became his slight figure; he did not look near his age, and was so happy and so ugly! The bride stood beside him in her beauty, tall, fresh, calm, composed; it was to be done, and she was doing it without one visible regret. "I will" was so firmly said, I started. What happened

after I never felt. Mrs Macpherson just whispered to me, "Help them, Eliza," and I believe I did; I tried I know. Dear, kind Mrs Macpherson, what a friend she was, never tiring, so wise too!

The breakfast went off well. The Colonel was so gay, he made his little speeches so prettily, that his wife looked quite proud of him. He took leave of the humbler friends in the hall so kindly, and of us so affectionately, that we all relented to him before we parted. We went down to the boat; the gentlemen crossed the water. On the gravelly shingle beyond were the London-built chariot and four horses, the man and the maid, and the two postillions with large favours, a mob of our people round the carriage raising such a shout as their "pride"—ay, and their blessing—was driven away. She never forgot the home of her fathers, never lost sight of the Duchus. Her protecting hand has been the one faithfully held over "the great plain of the fir trees." From that day to the day of her death she has been the mother to all our people, in weal or woe their prop. Beloved everywhere, she was worshipped there. Doing her duty everywhere, she has taken the duties of others on herself there. She departed that wintry day the only unmoved person in the throng. Home, to me at least, never seemed like home afterwards.

Colonel Pennington had a hunting-box in Leicestershire near the village of Normanton, where they lived till the spring. He then took a pretty, old-fashioned place called Trunkwell, near Reading, which they were very sorry to be obliged to leave in a year afterwards, when they fixed themselves at Malshanger for the rest of his life. It was near Basingstoke, in the higher part of Hampshire, an ugly house, but roomy and comfortable. The garden was good, the grounds pretty, plenty of fine trees, the scenery of the neighbourhood interesting. They improved the place much during their time in it; both of them had good taste and delighted in a country life. She liked her garden, her horses, and her new acquaintance, and was really happy, though

her husband was not a good-tempered man, and certainly often forgot that he had married a girl who might almost have been his grand-daughter, so that at first they rather hobbled on at times; but with so good and clever a man, and so admirable a character as hers, these little points soon wore smooth. They were not at first appreciated; the disparity between them made people suppose all could not be right, that she was mercenary, or the victim of mercenary relations, but as they were better known they were better understood. Few have left a fairer fame in any neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XX

1826-1827

THE marriage was over, bride and bridegroom gone, cake eaten, guests departed, and my father, my mother, and I were left to spend the remainder of the stern Highland winter together, for William went to Edinburgh on business and could not return. Alas! he was imprisoned for debt in the gaol on Calton Hill. The debt was of his own contracting, for in his college days he had been extravagant; he believed himself to be the heir of wealth, the son of a rich man, and he had the name of a handsome allowance which was never paid.

At the time of the execution of the trust deed, he had taken all my father's debts upon himself, bound himself to pay them, and they were upwards of £60,000. Had he been arrested for one of *them*, I think it would have killed my father; I never saw him so much affected by anything; and my poor mother, who had so gloried in the noble self-sacrifice of her son, sank under this; they were very miserable. The debt could not be paid, even by degrees; the sum allowed for the maintenance of the family and the expenses of the forest work was very small, and there were other creditors who would have come forward with their claims had we been able to satisfy this one. Now I saw the wisdom of Jane's marriage. She wrote pleasant letters; the post was our sunlight; it came but three times a week, but such a full bag; the franks permitted a frequent correspondence. Jane at Normanton, Mary at Fountain Dale,

meeting frequently at the various houses they visited, aunt Mary from Oxford, where she was now re-established in a small house, other letters and the newspapers, all helped to brighten the long evenings. Mr Caw always came in on the mail nights with his little bits of gossip for my mother. He lived at the Polchar in his capacity as book-keeper, which office he filled remarkably well.

My mother never went out; my father and I were never kept in, for though cold, it was sunny; hard frost gave us power to walk miles without fatigue. Yes—twice there were heavy falls of snow, which blocked up the hill road; the mail coach could not run, it and the unfortunate passengers were dug out of deep wreaths, and we had no post; so my father took to reading aloud while my mother and I worked. We had given up crossing the hall to the dining-room; dinner was laid on a narrow table in the lobby, and wheeled into the library, my mother being unfit for the change of apartments. She was well shawled when she went to bed.

Our establishment consisted of poor Robert Allan, who was butler and footman and gamekeeper, and never could be persuaded to leave a falling house. He had a fault, a serious one, he tippled; but the man was so good, so worthy, it had to be borne with to the end, whisky and all; he never left the family. The cook was Nelly, invaluable Nelly; she had been kitchen-maid under Mrs Watling, and now, by the help of my *Cuisinière Bourgeoise* (the best French cookery book then known), she and I together turned out little dinners that really gave an appetite to my poor father and mother, both of them rather dainty. I always dressed in the evening; it pleased them. We had a bright fire, and we *made* conversation. William, my brother, wrote cheerfully; his young friends all went to see him, and the Gibson Craigs provided him with any amount of luxuries from Riccarton. Before long he was released; nothing could be made of his confinement, so he was allowed to return home

a little before my father departed for London about Easter.

It was a great relief to get William back; I had done my best to carry out his orders, but the distances, the wintry weather, and the difficulty of procuring either money or food, made the position painful.

In the summer of 1826 my father brought Mary home; the fine weather revived our spirits, her cheerful gossip amused our poor mother, and the farm was selling eggs, and wool, and fruit, to the shooting lodges. We had no visitors, not even the Grants, this season. Aunt Mary had married again, Doctor Bourne, a rich man of great repute as a physician in Oxford. Kind aunt Mary! she sent my mother £60. We had, when my father went to London, three wedders for our supply of meat; we bought a score now, so with poultry, the garden, and the river, we did well till the winter—such a winter! our last in the dear Duchus.

We were quite alone, my mother, my sister Mary, and myself, and William off and on as business required. My mother kept her room until late in the day; Mary was her maid, and such a tender one. I had my tartan cloak, with a hood and a pair of gaol boots, and trotted across the yard to the cellar, and down to the farm to act housekeeper there, then back to the kitchen to manage the dinner. Fine education this.

We were happy, though our troubles were great. We had mutton enough, thanks to dear aunt Mary, and we sold enough of other things to buy our groceries of Robbie Cumming. Inverness had refused to honour my orders; heavy bills were there unpaid. Then there were the servants' wages; William paid the outsiders, but there was nothing for the insiders; how good they were! waiting so patiently, asking for their own as if begging for a favour. There had been good stores in the house, but they were vanishing. It was hard to bear up amid such perplexities. In a happy hour I opened my heart to the very kindest friend any one ever had, the Lady Belleville. Cold and harsh as the world

thought Mrs Macpherson, she had a warm heart, with a cool judgment, and untiring zeal in the service of those she loved.

She proposed my writing for the press. I had tried this the winter before—that heavy winter—wrote what I thought a lively little paper, “An Old Story,” from hints furnished by the vanity of our poor cousin Edmund Ironside after a visit of his to the hairdresser at Inverness, copied it fair, and sent it to Blackwood in a fictitious name, desiring an answer to be sent to Mr Sidey the postmaster at Perth, where our bag was made up, there being no post-office for years after at Lynwilg. Day after day did I watch the boy who went to meet the coach; no answer ever came. The editor probably never looked at the paper; but, ushered into the literary world afterwards by Belleville, it was favourably received by his friend Mr Fraser, and brought me £3. It did not go alone, Mary and I between us wrote a bundle of rubbish for the *Inspector*, and received £40 in return.

We wrote at night in the barrack-room, for we had been obliged to leave our more comfortable apartments on account of the state of the roof over that end of the old house. Whenever it either thawed or rained we had five or six cascades pouring into tubs set round the walls to catch the water. The barrack-room was inconvenient too; the little crooked staircase which led up to it was lighted by a large pane of glass in the roof, a skylight not very tightly fixed. Several times during the snowstorms we had to wade through a wreath of snow on the steps beneath it, pretty deep occasionally, so that we were wetted above the ankles, but we did not mind, we took off our shoes and stockings, and dried our feet by a good fire which we had provided for ourselves. Fuel being scarce, we gathered in the plantation as many fallen sticks as, assisted by a few peats taken from the stacks at the farm, gave us a bright fire for our midnight labours. Bits of candle stuck in succession on a save-all, manufactured by ourselves out of a nail and a piece of tin, performed

the part of lamp, and thus enlightened, we wrote away.

In an old patched dressing-gown with a warm shawl over it, my feet on the hearth-stone, and two or three potatoes roasting in the ashes, I passed many a happy hour. We worked late, for the Highland winters have very dark mornings, so we rose late. Mary's papers were very clever, very original, well deserving of the praise they received.

Dear old barrack-room! the scene of some sorrow, and many pleasures. In our younger days, in John's holidays, we used to give private entertainments there far away from molestation. We contrived a fire, made coffee, boiled eggs, had bread and cheese and butter and porridge. John was the caterer, as nobody ever refused him anything. How merry we were! Years after, when he was Governor of Jamaica, in one of the few letters he wrote me he recalled the gay doings of the barrack-room, the more enjoyable from their mystery.

When Mrs Macpherson sent us our £40, she sent us also by her Macpherson boy, on his shaggy pony called Rob Roy, a *Times* newspaper in which was a most favourable criticism of our contributions to the *Inspector*, especially of Mary's "Country Campaign of a Man of Fashion." We were wild; first we skipped, then we laughed, then we sat down and cried. In this state our only thought was, "We must tell mamma."

She was alone at work in the library; we laid our banknotes before her, presented the newspaper and Mrs Macpherson's note. We had dreaded her anger, for she was proud. Poor woman! that was over; she had suffered too much. "Dear good children," was all she said, and then she wept as we had done, but happiness prevailed. We had all the fun in the world arranging how to spend our treasure. We were so very badly off for necessaries, we had difficulty in settling what was most wanted. We had no walking shoes. It was amusing to see us in our house shoes—old satin slippers of all colours patched at the sides, looking a little more

respectable after we learned to dye them ; shabby dress gowns, because we had no plainer ; the two servant maids as shabby as ourselves, saying nothing, good creatures, and very grateful for the share of wages we were now enabled to give them. We three, my mother, Mary, and I, kept our secret, for had William known of it he would have borrowed some, he was so hard up himself, to keep work going. We thought it best to put by a little, have a nest egg, for the hour of need might come again ; but it never came, thank God, and the kind friends raised up for us—but I am running on too fast.

My mother thought a few pounds should be spent on me, to enable me to accept a kind invitation to Huntly Lodge in the spring. Several pretty dresses had been sent to me as presents and never made up, and white muslin was plenty in Robbie Cumming's shop, so I set out with the Bellevilles for Huntly.

I had always liked Lord Huntly, and he had known us young people from our birth ; my father and mother were as intimate with him as they had been with his mother, the beautiful Duchess, our pleasant neighbour for so many summers. He had married late in life, the unfortunate habit of too many men of fashion. Lady Huntly was an excellent woman ; she brought him a large fortune, a clear business head, good temper, and high principles. She soon set straight all that she had found crooked. She was not handsome, though she had a good figure, a good skin, and beautiful hands—the Brodie face is short and broad ; but she suited him, every one liked her, and she always liked me, so the fortnight I passed with her was very agreeable. There were several guests in the house, a large dinner-party every day, all of the Gordon name. Two of the Montagues, the Ladies Caroline and Emily, were staying with their uncle and aunt ; and Lord Charles Russell. It was an ugly country, the grounds uninteresting, nothing particular to do except the sorting of what became afterwards a very fine collection of shells and minerals, left by Lady Huntly, with all that

remained of her money, to her first cousin Brodie of Brodie.

Mary had well filled my place at home. She had a genius for management, and she amused my mother with her forest tales. Newstead was a never-failing subject, for there she got among the great people both of them liked. Mary had delighted in the sociable life she had led there. Of course she found the poor old Doune dull after it; had we not had our writings to occupy us her spirits might have got very low, for her fine mind was not sufficient for itself; with a spur and a prop she ran lightly through any life, wanting either she failed; but now at home she had both, and well she did her part. She helped me in all my works and assisted our mother, and then skipped merrily at night up to the "regions of fancy" in the barrack-room.

My poor mother just at this time received a great shock in the death of her eldest brother, William Ironside of Houghton-le-Spring. He was thrown from his horse and killed on the spot. She was much attached to all her family, and she felt this much; but there is a silver lining to most clouds. My father came back in the summer, John followed, and for a few weeks time passed as usual. Then came the end.

The Borough of Tavistock, for which my father had sat in the last two Parliaments, was now wanted by the Duke of Bedford for his wonderful son, little Lord John Russell. This enforced retirement closed the home world to my father; without this shield, his person was not safe. He left us; he never returned to his Duchus. When he drove away to catch the coach that lovely summer morning, he looked for the last time on those beautiful scenes he dearly loved and most certainly was proud of, though he never valued his inheritance rightly. He went first to London and then abroad, taking John with him. Then came the news of his appointment to a judgeship in Bombay; Charles Grant, now Lord Glenelg, had done it; and we were desired to proceed to London immediately to prepare for the voyage. It was a blessing, and a shock—to me at least; every one

else was rejoicing. Letters of congratulation came by every post ; my mother smiled once more, and set about her preparations for removal with an alacrity that surprised us.

There was a good deal to be done, for the house was to be left in a proper state to be let furnished with the shootings, a new and profitable scheme for making money out of the bare moors in the Highlands. We were to take nothing with us but our wardrobes, all else was to be left for sale, and lists of the property left had to be made to prepare the way for the auction. The stock and crop at the farm, the wine, the plate, the linen, the books, all and everything that was not furniture was to go, except a few pet treasures packed in a small box and left to the care of Mrs Macpherson. She sent them to me afterwards, and I have a few still, but what belonged to the Doune I gave back to John, and my own small collection of coins I sold during our Irish famine when we were sorely pressed for money ; they brought only £50, very welcome at that sad time, a time that set me writing again, and with success.

My mother upset herself by reading old letters before destroying them ; she was seriously ill. She warned me not to go through such a trial, and begged of me to burn all letters. I have done so, and regret it. Memory remains ever fresh ; its recollections are as painful as the words of a letter.

William would not let the creditors have the little pony carriage ; I don't know that it was exactly right, but nothing was ever said about it. It was given with its two pretty ponies, Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, to Lady Gibson Craig, by whom it was fully valued. It was the last remnant of our better days ; when every other luxury was parted with, that was kept for my mother's use ; she took no other exercise. When my father was at home he drove her out in it daily. I see them now—he in his grey *woodman's* coat with leather belt holding a short axe and a saw, breeches and long leather gaiters, a hat lined with green and turned up

behind, the shortness of his neck bringing the stiff collar of the coat too near the brim of it ; she in a drab greatcoat with a cape, made purposely for all weathers, and a queer-shaped black straw bonnet. Away they went all alone, out for hours, the commonest object of their drive being the pretty hill of Callart, at the end of Cambus Mor, which had been lately planted by my mother herself with money left her by her aunt Jane Nesham. Before Jane married, when my father was away *she* was the driver. She wore a large flap straw hat lined with green, her spectacles on, a plaid thrown round her ; standing up at difficult corners, nodding and calling out to every passer-by, on she whipped, my mother, the greatest coward in the world, quite at ease under her guidance. Dear old days ! happy through all our troubles. "Isna the heart tough that it winna break ?" said the unhappy widow Macpherson, who lost her three fine sons in the Spanish War.

The difficulty now was to provide funds for our journey. My mother had put by £10 of aunt Mary's money ; we had £5 left of the *Inspector*. Belleville, kind Belleville, brought us £40, part the produce of another packet of papers already printed, part advanced by him on some more which had been accepted, and would be paid for shortly. The old landau was cleaned, the horses ordered, the heavy trunks packed and sent off to Inverness to go by sea to London, and we were to start in the evening to dine and sleep at Belleville.

It was in August, early in the month ; the weather was beautiful, the country looked lovely, the Spey sparkled in the sunshine, the wooded hills on either side stood as they stand now, and we watched the sun setting behind Tor Alvie on that last day, without a tear. Mary and I had determined to be brave. We had called on every one of every degree ; we had taken leave of none, purposely avoiding any allusion to our approaching departure. We denied ourselves the sad pleasure of bidding farewell to favourite scenes. Once unnerved we feared giving way, so keeping actively busy, we went on day by day, looking forward

with hope and drawing the veil of resignation over the past.

My father had been knighted, and was safe in France, with John. William had been in London and Edinburgh and I know not where else, and had returned to take care of us. Poor William! how broken down he looked, how wise and thoughtful he was. He said an honourable recovery was before my father, happiness and comfort secured to my mother; we should nourish no feeling but gratitude.

On this last day, all packing being done by the help of my mother's old maid, whom we had brought from her inn at Aviemore to be with her during the night (the only person in or out of the house who knew how near was our departure), William and my mother were in the study sorting papers in the large black cabinet; Mary and I went out for a walk to the garden for fruit—the pretty garden, all banks and braes and little dells, with hanging birch all round. It was just a step into the wood at the upper end and then on to the Milltown burn, chafing and sparkling in its rocky bed as we followed it along the path under the Ord. We crossed the wooden bridge; I had always loved that shady lane with the old woman in her chair, with her fan, perched up high above, and the blue Cairngorm at the end. We went on; we caught the loch, its dark fir screens, the cottages near this end, the flour mill, the ruined castle on its island, our own pretty cottage with its porch and little flower-garden and small green lawn sloping down to the loch, our boat tied to the old stump, our cow grazing; we did not enter, we could not have sat down in the parlour our own hands had fitted up. We passed on into the path along the shore of the loch—Loch-an-Eilan—we did not go on to Loch Gaun, but turned off up the hill to the sheep-cote and so round that shoulder of the Ord by our own walk, to the seat round the birch tree on the knoll above the river where we had rehearsed our plays, and where Jane took the sketch of the Doune which Robson tinted; then we went down through the wood to the walk by the Spey, coming out

at the gate by the church, and in again to the planting by the backwater and so to the green gate by the beech tree, with few words, but not a tear till we heard that green door clasp behind us ; then we gave way, dropped down on the two mushroom seats and cried bitterly. Alas for resolution ! had we not determined to avoid this grief ? Even now I seem to hear the clasp of that gate ; I shall hear it till I die ; it seemed to end the poetry of our existence. We had not meant to take that round ; we had gone on gradually, enticed by the beauty of the day, the loveliness of the scenery, the recollections of the life from which we were parting. Long after we returned to the memory of this walk, recalling views, thoughts, words, never to be forgotten, and which we spoke of at sea, at Pau, and at Avranches with a tender melancholy which bound my dear sister Mary and me more firmly together ; we had gone through so much with none to help us. Everybody has a life, an inner life ; everybody has a private history ; everybody, at least almost everybody, has found his own lot at some particular period hard to bear. The trials of our house were severe enough. When our young cheerful spirits felt their bitterness, what must our poor mother have suffered that last sad day ; she so reserved, so easily fretted, so ill, and so lonely ; hers had been a thickly shadowed life, little of it really happy.

She had slept well, Mrs Mackenzie said ; all through the day she was composed, kept busy by William. About five o'clock he showed us the carriage on the shingle at the other side of the river, and putting my mother's arm within his own, he led her out. No one till that moment knew that we were to go that evening, there was therefore no crowd ; the few servants from the farm, joined by the two maids from the house, watched us crossing in the little boat, to which Mary and I walked down alone behind the others. Crossing the hall, William had caught up an old plaid of my father's to put upon the seat of the boat ; he called old John Mackintosh to row us over—Robert Allan was with the carriage. When leaving the boat, my mother threw the

plaid over the bewildered old man's shoulders. He knew it was the Laird's, and I heard he was buried in it. We entered the carriage, never once looked back, nor shed a tear ; very gravely we made out those eight miles among the hills and woods, and heaths and lochs, and the dear Spey, all of which we had loved from childhood and which never again could be the same to any of us.

Belleville and Mrs Macpherson received us so kindly, so warmly, cheerfully as of old. The dinner was even pleasant, so skilfully did these best of friends manage the conversation. No one was with them. Mrs Macpherson sat a long while with Mary and me at night, strengthening right feelings with all her powers of wisdom. She had had two pretty lockets made to enclose her hair, and she cut in two a long Trichinopoly chain to hang them on ; these were her parting gifts. Belleville gave to each of us a writing-case fully furnished. My mother, who was a beautiful needle-woman, had been embroidering trimmings broad and narrow to be left as a remembrance to her friend of thirty years. We avoided a parting, having arranged to set off early, before our hosts were up ; the only deceit we ever practised on them. We travelled on through the bleak hill road, and posting all the way reached Perth for dinner. Here an unexpected difficulty met us : a coachmaker, not paid for some repairs at various times, seized the carriage for £40. He was inexorable ; we must pay the bill or lose the carriage. William came to me ; I never saw him more annoyed ; we were in despair, knowing how little would upset our poor mother. It was the last straw—I recollected kind Belleville's £40 for my unfinished "Painter's Progress," very grieved to give it to such a hard man to pay him all when others, more deserving, would only get their due by degrees ; but we had no choice, so after a good night's rest we entered our redeemed carriage and drove on to Edinburgh ; there the carriage was seized again and allowed to go ; we wanted it no longer. We were much annoyed by hosts of unpaid tradesmen, whom it was agreed that I should see, as they were likely to be

more considerate with me — I, who could do nothing. William kept out of the way and we would not allow my mother to be worried. The only cross creditor among the crowd was old Sanderson the lapidary ; there really was not much owing to him, a few pounds for setting some of uncle Edward's agates ; these few pounds he insisted on getting, and as there was no money to be had he kept a set of garnets he had got to clean. They had been left to me by Miss Neale, the sister of our great-uncle Alexander's wife, were set in gold, and though not then the fashion, have been all the rage since. I was thankful to get rid of even one of those unfortunate men, whom I was ashamed of seeing daily at our hotel, Douglas's in St Andrew Square, where we were comfortably lodged, and where we had to wait for the sailing of the steamer—which then went but twice a week from Leith to London—and for a remittance to provide for our expenses.

At that season very few of our friends were in town, which was a relief to all, but Lord Jeffrey and Lord Moncreiff came in from their country houses to take leave of us. They were much attached to my sisters and me ; it was a truly uncle's kiss and uncle's blessing each left with us. I never saw Lord Moncreiff again ; Lord Jeffrey lived to greet me with the old warmth years afterwards.

One day and night we spent at Riccarton with the Gibson Craigs ; neither house nor grounds were then finished. We thought the scale quite suited to the old place and fine fortune. They were all kind, father, mother, sons, and daughters. We had been intimate for so long, so much together. Mary was married, the rest all at home and very sad at the parting, even William, though he affected high spirits. His father could not turn him into a politician, but he became a very useful and agreeable country gentleman, and he gained great credit by the reforms he made in the Edinburgh Record office. I was very sorry to bid him good-bye ; his brother, afterwards my brother-in-law, was less attractive, though so worthy.

We were two beautiful days and calm nights at sea ; I recollect the voyage as agreeable. It was so calm we steamed on in sight of the coast great part of the way ; the sea was alive with shipping, mostly small craft, and then we sighted the N. Foreland. We entered the river, when I was actually startled by the sight of two large Indiamen outward bound, floating down with the tide so grandly, moving on their way, their long, long way, with such a silent dignity. There seemed to be no one on board but the crew. As we passed the huge hulls and gazed upon the open cabin windows, our own destiny, so little liked, seemed to come more certainly upon us, and I turned away and wept.

We reached London, or rather Blackwall, in the afternoon, engaged two hackney coaches for ourselves and our luggage—my poor mother ! there was a fall ; she *did* feel it—and on we went to Dover Street, Piccadilly, where lodgings had been taken for us in the name of General N——. He and dear Annie were there to welcome us. So began a busy time. It is so long ago, so much was done, so very much was suffered, that I can hardly now, at the end of twenty years, recall the events of those trying days ; the order of them has quite escaped me. The few friends in or near London in the month of September gathered round us, dear aunt Lissy and all her Freres, and good old Sophy Williams, Jane and Colonel Pennington, Lord Glenelg and Robert Grant.

A violent ringing disturbed us one day, and a violent knocking too, by several people all insisting on being let in, on seeing some one, on finding Sir John Grant ; he was in these lodgings, they were sure. My father had come to see Sir Charles Forbes, and he had been watched and tracked ; he had lodged here before, during a fit of illness, and it was a mistake that they were taken for us, but he knew the old maiden landlady who had been so kind to him would be attentive to his family, and she was ; he had won her heart, as he won every one's, and she stood to us well. She said she had let her rooms to General N——, whose wife's trunks

with her address on them were luckily in the hall, and so she got rid of this alarm. For fear of another, it was determined to divide our party. John went to the Freres, Mary was carried off to Malshanger, my father and mother went to a lodging in a distant street, the General returned to his Cat and Fiddle, leaving dear Annie with me. Margaret Cooper came too now and then to help me, and Mary having left her measure with the required trades-people, I got through my work well, Lord Glenelg lending his carriage, for he would not allow Mrs N—— and me to go to the city or the docks in a hackney coach without a footman. Our imprudent father could not keep quiet; he was so well known he was followed once or twice, and he was so near-sighted he might easily have been seized, so it was resolved to send him away, and on a Sunday he and John steamed from the Tower stairs to Boulogne. William saw them off and then took my mother to Malshanger. At rest at last, I got on quickly with the necessary preparations.

As soon as all was in train, all our assistants at work, little Christy and I went down by coach to Basingstoke; there Jane met us driving quiet old "Goody" in her basket phaeton, and on we went four miles to that most comfortable, thoroughly English place, Malshanger, pretty, in an uninteresting country, being well wooded, the ground undulating, and the neighbourhood thickly studded with gentlemen's seats. We spent three most pleasant weeks at Malshanger—the Colonel seemed so glad to have us, and he was so good-natured. He rode with me all over those fine Hampshire downs, miles and miles away in every direction, he on his hunters in their turn, I on the "gentle Mortimer," which always carried his master to covert all through the hunting season.

My mother had gone to Oxford to stay with aunt Mary in her new home, a very wealthy one. Dr Bourne, a clever and amiable man, took good care of my mother, put her into good health, and kept her till William went to bring her up to London a few days before we started for Portsmouth, for the parting had to

be borne—poor Jane! We were very few days in town; the outfitter did all the packing. The Government gave £2000 for the outfit. The passage money was of course high; we had three of the best cabins, and there were the French expenses, and about £400 passed through my hands. Good Mrs Sophy Williams presented Mary and me each with a few yards of lace neatly folded; on opening the parcels a five-pound note was found pinned on the lace.

We had finished all our business with fewer mistakes than could have been expected, considering all that had to be done and how little used to management were the doers, and at 5 o'clock next morning we were picked up by the Southampton stage coach, with Lewis Grant in it as our escort; William had gone to France. Sir Charles Forbes, whose essential kindness was almost unexampled, had sent one of his head clerks to attend my mother on her journey. Lewis Grant of Kincorth and his twin brother had been wards of my father; there was an old connection between us.

Was it Southampton, or was it Portsmouth we sailed from? I think it must have been Portsmouth. Mrs Gillio was already there with her daughter and her brother, Colonel Grant. In the evening word was brought that our ship had moved out to the roads, Spithead, and though she would not sail till the following day, the passengers were ordered on board at once.

It was late in the September day—the 28th in the year 1827—nearly dark; we got into a good sailing boat and proceeded out to sea, Mrs Gillio, her brother, and Lewis Grant with us. In an hour we reached our “ocean home”; down came the chair, we were soon upon the deck, amid such confusion, noise, hubbub, all a dream, but not to last long, for the rumour grew in a moment that the wind had changed; our captain ordered the anchors up; our kind friends must go. Mrs Gillio parted with the last of her daughters, her youngest child, and with us whom she loved almost as well. Lewis Grant came up from the cabin, where he had been comforting my mother. He took leave of my

sister and me, a quiet leave. Had he not a romance at the bottom of his honest, warm Highland heart? I thought so when he and I met again and talked of her "who had no parallel." He had told my mother of the arrangement with Captain Henning, she was therefore watching for my father. We stood out to sea and beat about till nearly ten o'clock, when a Jersey boat sighted us, came alongside, and my father and both my brothers came on deck; a few moments were allowed us. My father shut himself up with my mother; John remained beside Mary and me. William, in an agony of grief, burst out of our cabin; we listened to the sound of the oars as the Jersey boat bore him from us, and then said Mary, pale as a corpse, "We are done with home."

William's story from that period for the next four years would be a good foundation for a novel; his struggles were very hard. He bore his trials well, and was helped by many friends, proving that there were kind hearts in a world some of us have found it a mistake to call so hard as it is reputed. I may touch on his romance again; at present I proceed with my own.

According to an arrangement with the creditors, Sir John Grant's debts were ultimately paid by himself and his son William.

CHAPTER XXI

1827-1828

A LONG four months' voyage in a narrow space among a crowd of strangers. My father and mother were the principal people; we had the best accommodation, and we formed a large party ourselves. My father and mother had one poop cabin, Mary and I had the other, Isabella's smaller one opened out of ours; opposite to hers was Mr Gardiner's; the two deck cabins were occupied by my brother John and the captain. It was a little circle apart from everybody else; they were all below on the main deck.

Lieutenant-Colonel and Mrs Morse were returning to India; a little girl with two brothers who had been at school in England, were going back to their parents in Ceylon; a young cavalry officer, a doctor, and I do not know how many cadets; altogether, with the three mates, between thirty and forty at the cuddy table, not omitting Mr Caw, that clever, good-hearted oddity, who was going with us to India in the hope of being provided for, as his long, unwearied services deserved.

Mr Gardiner was very agreeable and soon became a favourite with my father and Mary. He was a civilian, not young; he had been ten years in India, and was returning there after a two years' leave. He was about thirty, had held a good appointment, and expected a better. The family was Irish; the father, Colonel Gardiner, had inherited money and made more, and had left a large sum to his five children. A daughter died, one married a very gallant soldier—Sir

Edward Blakeney—two sisters remained unmarried and lived with an aunt at Twickenham. No difficulties could occur to render this intimacy undesirable, so while Isabella and I at the cuddy door were warbling pretty canzonettes to our light guitars, and listening in our turn to Mrs Morse, who often brought her harp up on deck in the evenings, Mr Gardiner and his ladye love amused us all by the care they took never to be far asunder.

We landed on the 8th of February 1828 in Bombay. We entered that magnificent harbour at sunset, a circular basin of enormous size, filled with islands, high, rocky, wooded, surrounded by a range of mountains beautifully irregular; and to the north on the low shore spread the city, protected by the fort, screened by half the shipping of the world. We were standing on the deck. "If this be exile," said my father musingly, "it is splendid exile." "Who are those bowing men?" said my mother, touching his arm and pointing to a group of natives with coloured high-crowned caps on some heads, and small red turbans on others, all in white dresses, and all with shoeless feet, who had approached us with extraordinary deference. One of the high caps held out a letter. It was from uncle Edward, who had turned the corner round Sir Griffin Wilson's wall so many years ago with his hat pulled down over such tearful eyes, and these were his servants come to conduct us to his country house.

I wish I had preserved a more minute recollection of my first Bombay impressions; they were very vivid at the time, and I remember being struck with surprise that all accounts of India that had fallen in my way were so meagre, when materials new and strange were in such abundance.

At soon as all the dignitaries and all the undignified had paid their visits my mother and I had to return the attention. Mary was excused on account of her approaching marriage, which ceremony indeed interrupted our civilities; but we got through as many calls as we could.

My sister's marriage was a grand affair. I do not remember how many people my aunt thought it necessary to invite to the breakfast; there were about twenty present at the ceremony in the cathedral. We had such a cousinhood at the Presidency, and Mr Gardiner and my uncle had so many friends, and there were my father's brother judges, etc. Good Mr Carr, afterwards bishop, married them.

For so very pretty a girl as Mary then was, so beautiful a woman as she became, there never was a less interesting bride. Her dress was heavy and unbecoming, and a very large veil, the gift of Mr Norris, hid all of her face except her nose. She was perfectly self-possessed all through the ceremony, and she went off with her husband in her new carriage to Salsette with as much composure as if she had been going for a drive with me.

I never pretended to understand Mary; what she felt, or whether she did feel, nobody ever knew when she did not choose to tell them. Like Jane, and I believe like myself, what she determined on doing she did, and well, without fuss, after conviction of its propriety. One thing is certain, she married a most estimable man, to whom she was truly attached; she made a most happy marriage, and she valued her husband to the end of her days as he deserved.

Our lovers returned after a retirement of ten days, and then began a round of entertainments to the newly married pair. Every incident was seized on by the community as excuse for party-giving. An Indian life then was eventless; to me it was very dull after Mary married and John left us. Really, old as I was, I was quite the fashion—a second season of celebrity, a coming out again! Like my father, I have all my life looked ten years younger than my age; nobody guessed me at thirty, and being good-looking, lively, and obliging, I reigned in good earnest over many a better queen than myself. Of course everybody was busy marrying me. "Now, don't mind them, Eliza, my dear," said uncle Edward; "don't fix yet, wait for Smith, my friend

Smith; he'll be sure to be down here next season, and he's the man I have chosen for you." Then my aunt, "I don't mind your not liking old so-and-so or that tiresome this, and that ill-humoured that, I had rather you married Colonel Smith than anybody." Then my cousins, "Oh you will like Colonel Smith, Eliza, every one likes Colonel Smith." "My goodness, Miss Grant," said Mrs Norris, "is it possible you have refused ——? The best match in the Presidency—will certainly be in council! Everybody must marry here; whom do you mean to marry, pray?" "I am waiting," said I, "for Colonel Smith."

One morning I was sitting at work; the cooler weather had restored us our needles and I was employing mine for Mary's expected baby, my mother lying on the sofa reading, when the chobdar in waiting announced Colonel Smith. He entered, and, in spite of all the nonsense we had amused ourselves with, we liked him. "Well," said Mary, on hearing who had called, "will he do?" "Better than any of your civilians," answered I, laughing, and we thought no more about him.

He had come down from Satara, where he commanded, for change of air; he lived with his friend, Dr Eckford, and we frequently met them in the evenings driving and sometimes in society, but our paths did not seem to cross. He paid no particular attention to me; nor did he dine in my father's house till many months after we had become acquainted. My father and he had got into a sort of pleasant intimacy ages before he seemed to think of me. We rode always on the Breach Candy road, which was close to us and agreeable from its skirting the sea, and our new companion seemed to like political discussions, for he and my father rode on in front deep in the Catholic claims which were then being finally discussed in Parliament, while I, by myself, had plenty to do in managing that dreadful Donegal and watching the Parsees' morning adoration of the sun.

These rides continued all the cold weather, our

party latterly reinforced by my cousin, John Cumming, who was staying with us, and who sometimes got twisted out of his usual place by me to the side of my father, Colonel Smith exchanging with him for a turn or two, to my father's regret, who on these occasions observed that the captain had inopportunately interrupted a very interesting argument on the influence of the Irish priesthood over their flocks; that poor Smith was a sad Orangeman, quite benighted, but honest and worth enlightening!

So began my happy future to gleam on me, particularly after a few hints from Dr Eckford, whom my mother about this time began to talk of as Love's messenger, and then styled roundly Cupid; such a Cupid! He knew his business well; threw shafts and bow away as unsuitable to a staid brigadier and a maiden past her prime. His object was to touch the lady's reason, which he did, no matter how. Who would have thought that a marriage thus systematically arranged could have turned out so well? It took a long time, however, for India, and while it was progressing my mother's first grandchild was born. It was my brother John's birthday, the 23rd of November, and all the cousinhood were assembled at the Retreat to do him honour; Gregor and Mary Grant were indeed staying with us. Mr Gardiner and Mary were expected, but just before dinner they sent their excuse; she did not feel quite well. On leaving the hall a note summoned my mother, and after the company departed I set off to Prospect Lodge, mounting the long, long, dimly-lighted steps that led up the side of the hill without a thought of the snakes I used at other times to be so nervous about.

The clock had struck twelve; it was the 24th. Five minutes after my arrival my little niece was laid upon my knees, and I believe for weeks after I thought of no other existing creature. We sisters had gone through so much together. This blessed baby opened another view of life to all.

To me I know that my baby niece was a perfect

delight all the pleasant cold weather; I walked about with her in my arms whenever she was brought to the Retreat or I could contrive a visit to Prospect Lodge. Before the birth of the baby Mary had been for months very suffering, first the heat and then the rains incommoded her greatly. She never took to Indian life, never rose to meet the fresh air in the mornings, and the evening drive was often shirked. The beginning of March brought a degree of heat which she found oppressive; she was ill, and advised to try the cooler air of the higher land; so an expedition was arranged to Khandalla, a beautiful plain at the head of the pass up the Ghauts on the road to Poonah.

As Mary would be dull alone, I was to go with her and her husband, a plan I liked. A change was pleasant, a journey in India new, life in tents delightful!

My letters from Khandalla, and my more vivid descriptions in conversation quite bit my father with a wish to change the relaxing air of the seaside for the freshness of the mountains; but he undertook a much more daring exploit than a visit to the Poonah Ghauts. Colonel Smith had inspired him with a wish to see more of the country, to try a few weeks of the Mahableishwa Hills during the present hot season, when Bombay was really too oppressive. These charming hills were in our new friend's district; he commanded the brigade at Satara, and Mahableishwa, though thirty miles distant, was included.

A large double-poled tent of Colonel Smith's was to be lent to us during our stay on the hills. The Governor's small bungalow, and the Resident's a little way off, were the only houses at the station; everybody else lived in tents, scattered about anywhere in groups of from five to six according to the size of the establishment.

The mountain air was enchanting, the sun hot in the middle of the day, yet quite bearable, the mornings and evenings delightful, the nights rather cold. The society was on the pleasantest footing; the way of life most agreeable as soon as we got into it.

My Colonel used to meet me most mornings just where the path from our tents joined the road ; we then went on together. One morning, either I was later than usual, or he was earlier, at any rate I arrived and he was not there. I did not know that I looked disappointed, but I suppose I looked up and down the road. "The Colonel Sahib has gone on," said the syce, pointing to the fresh marks of a horse's feet. I blushed, a little at the man's sharpness, a little at my cool Colonel's easy way of taking matters.

And now our time was up, and we were to go back to Bombay, and it was necessary to acquaint Sir John and my lady that I thought it wiser to go instead to Satara. It was but thirty miles, every comfort was already there in my Colonel's bungalow, most of my wardrobe was with me, and some furniture ; a clergyman was at hand—the smiling one—the Judge could grant the license, and the Resident do all the rest.

My father was delighted, particularly when he heard about the bachelor brother and the Irish estate. He was charmed, too, at the idea of the mountain wedding, so queer, so primitive. Not so my mother ; she had no wish for any marriage, it would only throw so much more trouble on her. She did not see that either of my sisters had done much for herself by her determination to marry. Jane bound to an old man who might be her grandfather, ugly, and not rich. Mary given up to her baby, never seeing a creature, nor of use to any one. She did not understand this craze for marrying ; pray, who was to write all the notes ? Colonel Smith was just a soldier, an Irish lad who went out as a cadet, like any of our Scotch lads, and a marriage huddled up in that sort of way, in a desert, on a mountain, without a church, or a cake, or any preparations, it would be no marriage at all, neither decent nor respectable ; she, for one, should never consider people married who had been buckled together in that *couple-beggar* fashion ; if there were to be a marriage at all it should be a proper one, in the Cathedral at Bombay by the clergyman who

officiated there, friends at the wedding, and everything as it ought to be.

There was no help for it, she was resolute, so we had to travel down the ghaut, and along the plains, a hundred miles, I think, for she would have no more sea, and travel back again after the ceremony, at the loss of a month's extra pay, for the Colonel did not receive his allowances when on leave.

So, a goodly company, we set out, Major Jameson and the Colonel riding, my father in a palanquin like the ladies. We travelled long and wearily before reaching the first halting-place, a comfortable bungalow where all was ready for a late dinner. The two gentlemen had ridden on, my mother and I were not long behind them, but we waited nearly an hour for my father, who, obliging his bearers to follow some directions of his own, had gone a long round. Good claret, well cooled, and some champagne, greatly enlivened the entertainment.

On we went, arriving in Bombay in high good humour, all but poor Colonel Smith, whose horse shying or stumbling at the crossing of the stony bed of a river, he got a severe fall, and was laid up for some weeks from a strain, in his friend Dr Eckford's house.

CHAPTER XXII

1829-30

MR GARDINER and Mary had removed to a house in the Fort in Rampart Row, where they were engaged in packing up their effects, having determined on going home to England. We were all distressed at this strange resolution; he was in good health, she no worse in India than at home, and the child was thriving, so that to throw up the service when he was so near the top seemed a pity. However, they had decided on going; they took their passage in a small Liverpool merchantman, three hundred tons, and waited only to see me married. The last week of their stay, having sold all they did not mean to carry home, they removed to the Retreat, which I was glad of for all their sakes.

Ten days before our marriage, news arrived of the death of my Colonel's brother, which made him possessor of the Irish estate, then valued at £1200 a year. My Colonel wished me to put on mourning for his brother on reaching Satara, so my wardrobe had no addition with the exception of three pretty new gowns sent out luckily by the London dressmaker for me, with a pelisse and hat and feathers for my mother, which she, not fancying, made over to me.

My father gave me twenty gold mohurs on my wedding morning, and as uncle Edward had also given me a present, I felt rich for the first time in my life; and I never felt poor again, and though circumstances reduced our future income infinitely below our expecta-

tions, we so managed it that we have never owed what we could not pay, nor ever known what it was to be pressed for money.

My Colonel was married in his staff uniform, which we thought became him better than his cavalry light grey. There was a large party of relations, a few friends, and the good Bishop, then only Mr Carr, married us. My mother, who had become reconciled to my choice, outraged all propriety by going with me to the Cathedral; both she and I wished it, as I was to proceed across the bay immediately after the ceremony. So it all took place, how, I know not, for with the awfulness of the step I was taking, the separation from my father and mother, and the parting for an indefinite time from dear Mary, I was bewildered all that morning, and hardly knew what I was doing till I found myself in the boat sailing away among the islands, far away from every one but him who was to be in lieu of all to me for evermore.

In the month of October, asthma, to which for many years my husband had been subject, attacked him seriously. Night after night he spent in an easy chair smoking stramonium and appearing to suffer painfully. As the fit became worse instead of better, Dr Bird, who had returned to his duties, advised change of air, not to Poonah but to Bombay, to leave the high ground at once and descend to the coast for a while. He told me privately the stomach and liver were deranged from long residence in a tropical climate and that our best plan would be to return home. This neither of us wished, and we suggested the Neilgherries; he said they were only a makeshift, present ease, but no remedy. So we proceeded to Bombay, where we took up our residence with my father and mother.

Colonel Smith felt better for a day or two, and then he got ill again. Dr Eckford recommended a consultation, so Dr M'Adam and Dr Penny were called in, and they decided for a voyage home. Whether they were right or wrong, who can say? They were so uneasy about him that they asked for a private interview

with me, and told me he was in serious ill-health, had been too long in that climate, that another season could not but go very hard with him, that a stay in the Neilgherries was only a palliative, not a cure, and that, in short, were he not to sail for England they could not answer for the consequences.

My father was unwilling to lose us from India. He went again to Dr M'Adam, and on returning told me there was nothing for it but the voyage home. I must own I was very sorry. We had made up our minds to remain three years longer, and this sudden retirement from place and pay was a disappointment.

After many inquiries, visits to many ships in harbour, and careful search as to their commanders, we decided to sail in the *Childe Harold*, a new, swift vessel beautifully fitted up, commanded by Captain West, an old experienced lieutenant in the Royal Navy. He was to make a coasting voyage, which was particularly recommended for my husband.

This settled, we furnished one of the poop cabins without much cost, as my father made over to us a good deal of our former cabin furniture. The small cabin next ours was taken for little Willy Anderson and his maid, who was to act as mine. The Colonel engaged a native male attendant, as when a violent fit of asthma attacked him he was totally helpless. The small cabin opposite was taken by Dr Eckford, who had resolved to pay a short visit to the Cape. We had thus prepared for as much comfort as a homeward voyage admits of; it is rarely as pleasant as a voyage out, for, in general, health and spirits are wanting to those who are leaving their occupation behind them.

My last sight of my father was in the cabin of the *Childe Harold*, where he and my mother left me late on the evening of the 4th of November; he lingered behind her one moment to fold me to his heart again, neither of us speaking, and then he vanished from my sight for ever. Long I sat listening to the stroke of the oars which carried them back in the darkness to their desolate home. It was a dreary parting.

Very early in the morning of some day towards the end of April 1830 we anchored in the roads off Portsmouth. Most of the gentlemen called boats and went ashore. Captain West returned with delicious things for breakfast, fresh eggs, butter, cream, fine bread; how we enjoyed the feast! It gave us strength for our preparations.

Our two servants bestirred themselves; Malek was to remain on board in charge of our heavy luggage; Mary, with the trunks selected, was to land with us. The Colonel was the difficulty; for a week past he had not been able to move hand or foot without bringing on a spasm. They had said at Bombay that he would not live to reach home. They said at sea that he would die on the voyage. It seemed this last day as if we should never get him safe ashore.

A chair was prepared, he was carried out to it, laid on it, lowered to the boat, lifted up and settled among cushions. We were about half an hour rowing in, and we landed by the same steps on the same quay, and we had secured rooms at the same hotel looking on the harbour, from which I had started two years and a half before for India. The captain had taken the rooms in the morning as the nearest to the water and so the most convenient for the poor Colonel. What was our amazement when the boat struck, to see him rise unassisted, walk up the steps, and along the quay in his large cloak, and seat himself in the little parlour without a gasp! We ordered what seemed to us the most luxurious of repasts, tea, bread and butter, and muffins; we even played whist, and when we went to bed, the Colonel lay down and slept till morning, the first time he had ventured on such an indulgence for six weeks. I was too happy to sleep.

Next day I walked about the town *with my Colonel* and found it piercingly cold on the Ramparts. Before going out I had written to Jane to say we should be with her next day. Dear Jane, she was watching at the gate when we reached Malshanger.

The party assembled at Malshanger consisted of Mary, her husband, and *two* children, Tom having been born the previous January, William, aunt Bourne, and her stepdaughter, Henrietta. Aunt Bourne had been at Malshanger all along; her rich and happy marriage had ended in a second widowhood, and she was left the charge of a stepdaughter, who was to her all that her own daughter could have been. Henrietta was particularly attractive in looks and manners, and took to us all. Poor little Willy Anderson, who cried bitterly on leaving his "auntie," was to be delivered to Miss Elphick in Kensington; she had given up the governess line, having her mother to provide for, and was trying to establish a sort of infant boarding-school, which, poor soul, she never succeeded in making a profitable speculation.

The Gardiners had taken a cottage at a pretty village three miles off down the hill, surrounding the parish church which we attended; they took it for six months. It was an old, good-sized farm cottage, with a porch, and a draw-well, and latticed windows, and a new front, with large rooms, and large windows looking on a flower-garden. Their voyage in that little boat had been very boisterous; they escaped shipwreck by a mere chance; instead of landing at Liverpool they were stranded on the coast of Galloway, landed in boats, started with half their luggage for London, in postchaises, and after a London lodging took a house at Ham, to be near Mr Gardiner's aunt, Miss Porter; then they tried Cheltenham, and at last responded to Jane's proposal of this cottage. A few days sufficed to settle them most comfortably. They were very happy there, always cheerful, everything nice about them, the children merry, dear little things. Jane and I often drove in the basket-carriage with "Goody," and while she wandered through the village visiting the poor people who shared her bounties, I sat by Mary's work-table in the window opening on the garden, where Mr Gardiner delighted in being busy, little Janie in her white frock and

blue sash trotting about the room, and baby Tommy on my knee.

All parties were anxious that my Colonel and I should settle in that neighbourhood; there was a desirable place, Tangier, to be let, but we could not take it. The sharp air disagreed with him, and besides, duty and his early attachments recalled him to his own green isle. In London he was comparatively well; asthma attacked him directly he returned to us. It was plain he could not stay at Malshanger, so he left us for Dublin.

My sisters and I had a subject of anxiety in William's engagement to Sally Siddons; about this time she came on a visit to Mary, her sister Elizabeth followed to Malshanger; William, of course, was with his affianced. The news of their engagement had not reached Bombay when we sailed. I met it in England, I must say, with dismay. I feared my mother would give way to a violence of disapproval that would make all concerned very uncomfortable, and that would upset my father. Very anxiously we all awaited our Indian letters, Jane, Mary, and I were grave, William in a fever, Sally calm. Mrs Siddons had written to my father detailing the progress of the attachment, which she would not sanction without his consent. She touched on William's faults of character, but believed them to have been redeemed by the way in which he had supported adversity. William was keeping his terms at the Temple, Lord Glenelg having obtained permission for him to proceed as a barrister to Bengal. The last paragraph of Mrs Siddons' letter did probably no harm; it stated that Sally's fortune would be at least ten thousand pounds.

My father received this letter alone, and alone he determined to consider it before venturing to inform my mother. He passed a sleepless night, and when at dawn he made up his mind to rouse his sleeping partner with the news, he found he might have saved himself all perturbation; my mother had heard nothing for a long while that had given her so much pleasure! A most cordial invitation to William and his wife accom-

panied the consent to the marriage; Jane gave a grand dinner, Colonel Pennington produced champagne, and an evening of happy family cheerfulness followed.

On the 3rd of July my baby girl was born. I had a peep of my husband on his way from Dublin to London, and he returned only to take me away, being ordered by his doctor to Cheltenham for a course of the waters. He came back in a pretty *britchska* that he and William had chosen for me; Annie N—— and these two travelling together in it. After a few days we packed up and packed off, and then indeed I felt I was gone out from among my own kindred, and had set up independently—a husband—a baby—an end indeed of Eliza Grant.

NOTES

P. 18. *His wife did not long survive him.*—She was killed on the 2nd of August 1797, in a carriage accident, whilst travelling from England to Rothiemurchus with her daughter and son-in-law on a first visit to their northern home. They stopped at the inn of Feshie to water the horses, and whilst the bits were out of their mouths, a herd of pigs dashed round the corner of the inn, and knocking down a ladder leaning against the wall, startled the horses, who set off at full speed towards the bridge over the Feshie; the bridge had no parapets, the wheels went over the side, and phaeton and all fell over down the steep rocky banks to the bed of the river. The landlord, who had rushed after, arrived in time to save the laird by catching hold of his heel as he was disappearing over the brink; he was severely injured, but Mrs Ironside was killed on the spot. Mrs Grant, with her baby, Eliza, was in another carriage, and witnessed the accident; it is still remembered in the countryside how the poor lady scrambled down through the shrubs and rocks, crying on her mother, to find her lying dead below.

P. 24. *A long low hill.*—The Doune hill is supposed to be inhabited by one of the numerous Brownies of tradition. This one was a friendly little fellow who used to come out nightly from his hill, and work hard in the kitchen tinkering the pots and pans in return for "the cream-bowl duly set." But one unfortunate night the laird was kept awake by the hammering, and cried out peevishly to the Brownie to stop his noise and be off with him. The Brownie, in high dudgeon, retired within his hill, and has never resumed his service at the Doune, though he is supposed to account for the occasional disappearance of milk left standing in the offices.

He may still be heard at work inside the hill, and there is a belief that in time his resentment will subside and he will return to his former haunts. One of the babies of "the family," born in 1843, was peculiar-looking as a new-born child from having marked features and unusually long dark hair; at first sight of her one of the old women who had come for the occasion cried out, "Eh, sirs! it's the Brounie come back again!"

P. 64. *Where they came from . . . I really do not know.*—In 1701 four brothers Raper, Richard of Langthorne, Henry, Matthew, and Moses, were entered at Herald's College as grandsons of Richard Raper of Bodesley, county of York, and entitled to bear his arms. Moses married Martha, daughter of Sir William Billings, Lord Mayor of London, from whom he bought the manor of Thorley in 1714. Dying without issue, he left Thorley to his brother Matthew of Wendover Dean, in the county of Bucks, who married Elizabeth, sister of Sir William Billings. This Matthew had seven children, of whom the eldest succeeded him at Thorley, and is the great-uncle Matthew of the Memoirs; the fourth was John of Twyford House, ancestor of the Grants and Freres; the sixth was Henry, father of Admiral Raper.

P. 64, *Descended in the direct line from Sir John Beaumont.*—There is a mistake here. Elizabeth Beaumont, though of the same stock as the Beaumonts of Grace Dieu, did not (alas!) descend from them but from an elder branch. Sir Thomas Beaumont, the second son of John, first Viscount Beaumont, married Philippa Maureward, heiress of the Manors of Godesby and Cole Orton. He had two sons, John, who succeeded him (d. 1459), and Thomas, ancestor of the Beaumonts of Grace Dieu. The fourth in descent from John was Sir Nicolas of Cole Orton (d. 1502). The descendants of his eldest son, Sir Henry, carried on the main Cole Orton line for a time, when it reverted to the descendants of his second son, Sir Thomas of Stoughton Grange; the male line of the Beaumonts of Cole Orton came to an end with Sir George Beaumont, the friend of Wordsworth, fifth in descent from Sir Thomas of Stoughton Grange. Elizabeth Beaumont was fourth in descent from the same Thomas; she married Dr William Hale, and died 1726; he died in 1758, aged 84.

Their only child, Elizabeth, married John Raper of Twyford House.

P. 68. *He must have been the Admiral's father.*—He was the Admiral himself, and figures as a boy of ten or twelve in his cousin's diary. There are, however, various passages in it concerning "Dick," afterwards Lord Howe, who seems to have loved and have sailed away. When his sister-in-law, Mrs Howe, has to inform Miss Raper of Captain Howe's marriage elsewhere, she enters in her diary: "Thought I should have died. Cried heartily, damned him as heartily, and went about loose with neither life nor soul." Another curious entry under 10th October 1758 describes how a largish party of ladies went to the fair at Blackheath, and continues, "Got out again safe and sound, a pretty good crowd, got kissed three of us in coming back." The diary is mostly in cipher.

P. 108. *Sir William Grant, the Master of the Rolls.*—The story goes that on one occasion, when Dr William Grant arrived from London late at night, he was met at Aviemore by his brother, the laird, who bade him go at once to the help of one of the floaters' wives, who was in sore trouble. He did so, and before morning a lad-bairn, the future Master of the Rolls, was safely born. Perhaps he owed his fore-name to this circumstance.

P. 174.—Among the skits of this witty satirist was a doggerel ballad rhyming all the crack-jaw names of the Highland clans. One of the verses runs thus:—

Come the Grants of Tullochgorum
Wi' their pipers gaun before 'em,
Proud the mithers are that bore 'em,
Fee fa fudle fum.
Come the Grants of Rothiemurchus,
Ilka ane his sword and dirk has,
Ilka ane as proud as a Turk is,
Fee fa fudle fum.

P. 181.—The kirkyard at Rothiemurchus contains the tomb of the Shaw who was captain of the Clan Chattan in the battle between the clans at the Inch of Perth. On the slab covering him stand five curious cylinder-shaped stones, one at each corner and one in the middle, which tradition says disappear and reappear with the ebb or flow of the fortunes of

the family in possession of Rothiemurchus. While the Duke of Bedford rented the Doune, one of his footmen, an Englishman, carried off one of the stones for a frolic, causing great indignation among the people, not appeased by his being made to bring it back; and when, a few days after, the poor fellow was drowned in fording the Spey, no doubt was entertained that he had brought on his doom by his temerity in meddling with the Shaw's stone.

P. 184. *In the year 1556, I think.*—It was in 1570 that Patrick received from his father a charter of the lands of Muckerach and others; in 1580, upon his own resignation, he received another of the same lands, in which he is designed "of Rothiemurchus."

P. 184. *The Shaws having displeased the Government by repeated acts of insubordination.*—Allan Shaw, the last of the Shaws of Rothiemurchus, was outlawed and his estates confiscated for the murder of his step-father, Sir John Dallas. There was bad blood between the two, his mother's marriage being highly displeasing to the young man. One afternoon, as Allan was walking along the road, his dog, seeing Dallas enter the smithy, followed, and was kicked out by him. Allan drew his sword, entered the smithy, cut off Dallas' head, and returning to the Doune threw it down at his mother's feet. The room she was sitting in is still pointed out. The scene of the murder was a spot now included in the garden, and every August the scent of blood is said to rise there in memory of the deed committed in that month. Shaw fled from justice, and met with his death shortly afterwards. The Chief of Grant purchased for a large sum his estates, or rather the right to hold them if he could, and bestowed them with the same condition on his second son Patrick. The Mackintosh, as Shaw's chief, considered the defaulter's property should have fallen to him, and Patrick's possession was by no means an easy one.

P. 186. *Grizzel Mor.*—During the troubles of 1688 this lady successfully defended the Castle of Loch-an-Eilan from an attack made upon it after the Battle of Cromdale, by a party of the adherents of James II. under General Buchan.

P. 186. *Surnamed Macalpine, I don't know why.*—He

was formally adopted into the Clan Alpine, and given the name, in recognition of his friendliness and good offices to the unfortunate Clan Macgregor.

P. 186. *Lovat*.—There is a story well known in the north that Macalpine and Lovat, playing cards together, and Macalpine hesitating long over his play, Lovat grew impatient and urged him to go on with the game. "Well, Lovat," said Macalpine, "the truth is, I have a hand that puzzles me; you'd be fitter to play it yourself, for it's a *knave between two kings*."

P. 187. *Stories of Macalpine's days*.—They are still to be heard by those who bring an ear for the Gaelic. Here are one or two.

The Mackintosh set up a mill just outside the Rothiemurchus west march, and threatened to divert the water from the Rothiemurchus lands. Macalpine, having received Rob Roy's promise to back him, sent a haughty letter to the Mackintosh, who thereupon vowed to march in his men and burn the Doune. Macalpine was at this time at variance with his chief, and could not expect assistance from him, and, being unable to cope alone with so powerful a chief as the Mackintosh, grew very uneasy as time passed and Rob Roy made no sign. The Mackintoshes were assembled in force on the march, and Macalpine sat one night in his room with his head down on his arms on the table, when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder, and a voice spoke, "What though the purse be empty the night, who knows how full it may be in the morn?" He started up, and there was Rob Roy, alone, with no sign of followers. After a hearty greeting, the laird asked "But where are your men, Rob?" "Take you no heed of that," said Rob, and called for his piper. Up and down in front of the Doune house paced the piper playing the "Macgregors' Gathering"; and as he played, on the opposite side of the Spey in Kinrara appeared two Macgregors, and then three Macgregors, and then two Macgregors, till at last a hundred and fifty of the prettiest men in Rob Roy's band were standing there fully armed. And the piper had orders not to stop playing till all were out, and it nearly burst him. And as the Macgregors came out by twos and threes, the Mackintoshes on the opposite side stole off by fours and fives, until, as the last Macgregor took his place, the last Mackintosh disappeared.

Then Rob Roy wrote a letter to the Mackintosh (which is repeated from beginning to end in the original Gaelic), in which he threatened to go through his country and leave not a man alive nor a house unburned if any further displeasure were offered to Rothiemurchus. And he bade Macalpine send for him if occasion arose, and he would come, no matter how far. "But," said Rob, "it's a far cry to Balquhiddy, and no one here who knows the way"; so he left behind him two of his young men, great runners, who would go to hell if he bade them, to be despatched to fetch him if need were, for they would do a hundred miles in twenty-four hours. The Mackintosh's mill was destroyed, and a song was made of it called "The Burning of the Black Mill." The tune is one of the best reel tunes in the country-side.

Macalpine had a daughter (natural) called Mairie bhuie, or yellow-haired Mary. One of the young men left behind by Rob Roy fell in love with her, and she with him, but Macalpine would not hear of it. So Macgregor and she ran off together, and hid themselves in a distant part of Rothiemurchus. About five or six years afterwards the laird was out hunting and lost his way. Presently he saw a bothie, and Mairie, looking out, saw him, and bade her husband run quickly out at the back and hide. And when Macalpine came in she warmed and comforted him, and gave him good food and good drink, until, when he was rested and refreshed, he said to her, "Noo fetch me the guidman's heid in your apron." "Na, na, Laird," she answered, "I've ower mony heids at my fireside for me to spare you his heid." "Hoot, lassie," said Macalpine, "gae 'wa and bid him come ben." So Macgregor was called in, and Macalpine gave him the farm of Altdru. They lived there from generation to generation till the time of Hamish Macgregor, who was the last of the race. He died in the Doune Square in 1890.

It is said that Macalpine never slept at night without praying for two men, Rob Roy and the Duke of Gordon.

P. 188. *His second bride*.—The story goes that Macalpine, being determined to marry, asked Tullochgorm if he had any marriageable daughters, and was answered two, who were entirely at his disposal. So Macalpine went wooing to Tullochgorm, but the two young ladies, brought in one after the other, declined the old laird's proposal. Nothing daunted, Macalpine asked if there was no other daughter of the family,

and was answered, "Ay, there's a bit lassie rinnin' aboot." Macalpine bade them send for her. "So Rauchel was fetched in from the byre, and when she came ben she just made a graan' curtsey, and said, 'Deed, Macalpine, it's proud I'll be to be Leddy Rothiemurchus.'" So they were married, and she became the mother of several fine sons.

Macalpine's age both at death and at his marriage with Rachel has been greatly exaggerated by tradition. Their eldest son, William, received a commission in the Highland Regiment in 1742; he was probably a year older than his brother Lewis, who was born in 1728. This would bring Macalpine's second marriage to 1726 at latest, at which date he was sixty-one years old. His first wife was the daughter of Patrick, tutor of Grant, second son of John Grant, sixth of Freuchie, Chief of Grant.

P. 252. *He was long regretted.*—"The Captain" is so well remembered that he is still seen at times looking out of the upper windows of the house at Inverdrue.

P. 263. *A certain William Grant.*—It was when Dr William Grant was living at the Doune that there befell a quarrel in the kitchen between the cook and the turnspit; she came crying to her master that the boy had raised a knife at her and cut off her hair; he meanwhile took to his heels, and Dr William, coming to the door, saw him running down the avenue at top speed. "Come back, you black thief, till I give you your wage!" shouted the Doctor in Gaelic. "Wait you till I ask for it," called back the boy. This was how General William Grant came to enlist.

P. 369. *Sir Walter Scott.*—Scott has a reference to one of the Rothiemurchus traditions in the fourth canto of *Marmion* :—

And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurchus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.

The gigantic figure is said to offer battle to the belated traveller through the woods; to him who boldly accepts it no harm is done, but a display of terror is punished by death.

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